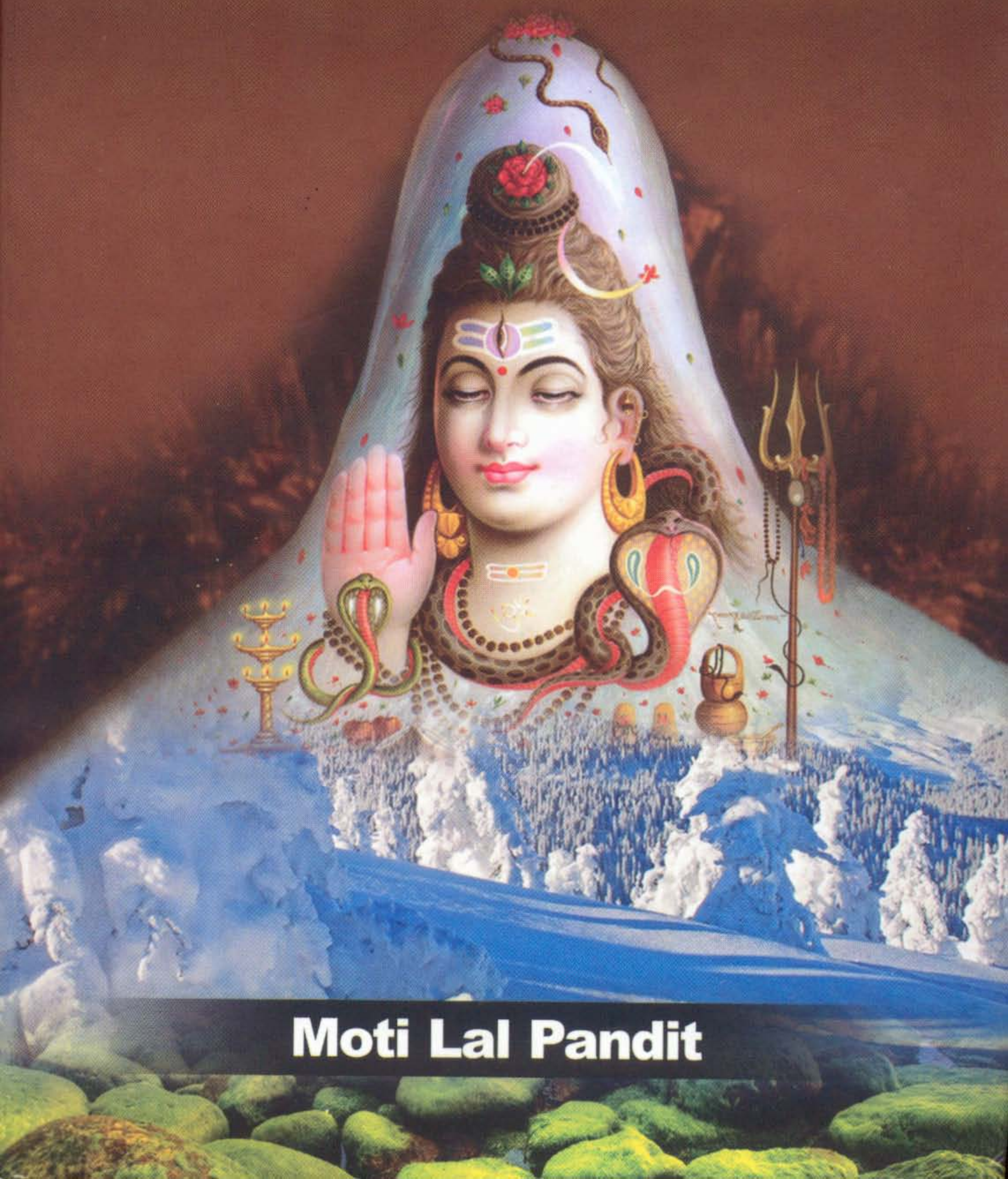
The Philosophical and Practical Aspects of Kāśmīra Śaivism

A Study of Trika Thought and Practice



Moti Lal Pandit

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The philosophical thought of Trika Śaivism of Kashmir adumbrates a new dawn in the religious as well as philosophical history of India. It is so rich in its metaphysical thought as to be universal on account of it being open-minded and synthetic. It recognizes the validity of philosophical thought of every school to the extent that the truth is apprehended and recognized. It is because of this synthetic approach that Trika Śaivism has successfully wedded realism with idealism. It is idealistic to the extent that it maintains that the world is nothing but the emanation of consciousness. It is realistic to the measure that it concludes that the emanation of the objective world is real. It rejects the Vedāntic view of the Absolute as being mere light of consciousness. Instead, it speaks of the Absolute as being both the light of consciousness as well as cognitive self-awareness. It is on the basis of this philosophical thought that the Trika thinkers have equated the Absolute with absolute Freedom. Thus, the Absolute of the Trika is not an inactive or impersonal principle, but it is as active as the God of theism. It is an absolutism that has theistic orientation characterized by Freedom. Above all, it gave birth to a new school of philosophy, namely, the Pratyabhijñā School.

Moti Lal Pandit, trained as a theologian and linguist, has been engaged in Indological research for the last thirty years. He has published articles as well as books on a vast range of subjects. Initially, he began his research in Vedic religion and philosophy. Gradually, he shifted his attention towards Buddhism, and, as a result of this shift, he has been successful in publishing a number of books on Buddhist philosophy and history. For the last several years, however, he is fully engaged in the study of Trika Śaivism of Kashmir. Some of his publications: *Vedic Hinduism; The Essentials of Buddhist Thought; Śaṅkara's Concept of Reality; Buddhism in Perspective; Being as Becoming; Towards Transcendence; Śūnyatā: The Essence of Mahāyāna Spirituality; Buddhism: A Religion of Salvation; Encounter with Buddhism; The Buddhist Theory of Knowledge and Reality; Transcendence and Negation; The Trika Śaivism of Kashmir; The Disclosure of Being; An Introduction to the Philosophy of Trika Śaivism;* and *From Dualism to Non-Dualism.*

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Preface

Śaivism, in its long evolutionary history, has gone through many phases of development in terms of its praxis and philosophical reflection. In its initial phase, it might have been simple or crude in its approach to such existential questions of life as, for example, the meaning of life in the world or its ultimate destination, but, with the passage of time, it began to focus on such issues that impinge directly every individual being. It is the force or intensity of the problem that ultimately found its metaphysical expression in such Upaniṣadic texts as the *Śvetāśvatara*. Prior to the composition of this Upaniṣadic text the metaphysical reflection of Śaivism is scattered through almost all the Vedic texts. But the tenor and tone of this reflection is diffusive and incoherent. It is, however, from the time of the composition of the *Śvetāśvatara* (400 BC) that the metaphysical reflection of Śaivism takes a coherent shape and form.

The earliest expression of this metaphysical reflection is to be found in the emergence of the Pāśupata sect, which is the earliest historical school of Śaivism. The theological creed as well as the metaphysical thought of the Pāśupatas soon spread throughout the Indian subcontinent due to the efforts of its proselytizing monks. At the heart of Pāśupatism is a kind of theism that propounds such philosophical pluralism that maintains sharp ontological difference between God, soul and matter. The Pāśupatas, at the theological level of belief, think that life-in-the-world is full of pain, and so the aim of religious practices should be to bring to cessation every form of existential pain by adhering

to such religious discipline and norms that are austere and rigorous. The Pāśupatas, due to its own inner dynamism, gave rise to a new school in the form of Kāpālikas. This sect is given this nomenclature on account of the fact that its adherents wore a garland of skulls. As skull-bearers, the Kāpālikas wanted to assert the metaphysical truth through the symbol of the skull, which is that human existence ultimately is so transient as to be reduced to a mere lifeless skull. While believing that the transience of temporality could be overcome only by resorting to such religious discipline that is tortuous, so it should not surprise us of the description that Abhinavagupta has given concerning the practices of Kāpālikas in the following terms: *dakṣiṇaṃ raudrakarmāḍhyam* (*Tantrāloka*, 37.27).

The Pāśupata realistic pluralism as well as theological dualism was given further push by the Śaivasiddhānta denomination of Śaivism. The adherents of the Śaivasiddhānta think that this specific denomination owes its origin to some ancient Āgama texts called *Nānmurai*. There is, however, another tradition that maintains that a saint from the Kāleśvarī temple near Godvari was invited by a Cola king called Rājendra to preach the doctrines of Śaivism in his realm. Whatever be the origin of this school of Śaivism, the fact is that this school, while taking deep roots in the soil of Tamil region, has enriched Tamil language through the poetical compositions of its saints. While following the pluralism of Pāśupatas, it has broadened the philosophical interpretation of theism by maintaining it to be the most appropriate form of religion. Although accepting yoga and knowledge as a means of salvation, yet it has confined its religious activities to temple ritualism and to forms of such devotionalism that is surcharged with emotional sentiment. It is because of this overwhelming burden of ritualism that Abhinavagupta termed Śaivasiddhānta as being a religion of rituals: *siddhānte kārmabahulām* (ibid.).

In addition to the above two schools, there emerged another school of Śaivism, namely, Vīraśaivism, in the region of Karnataka, which owes its present form to Basava of twelfth century. Insofar its philosophical thinking and some forms of religious practices are concerned, they seem to have a long prehistory. It has a

philosophical orientation that is more pronounced towards non-dualism than towards dualism, and accordingly propounds the theory of *sāmarasyavāda*, or the theory that delineates the idea of unity of Being. The philosophical vision of this school, if seen from the perspective of Trika, comes very close to that of mono-dualism (*bhedābheda*). Another school of Śaivism, which is deeply influenced by the Vedāntic thought, is that of Śrīkaṇṭha. It accepts the causal doctrine of transformation (*pariṇāmavāda*) of the Sāṅkhya. This school of Śaivism, in the light of this causal theory of transformation, adumbrates the view that the phenomenal world is but the result of God's own transformation.

This evolutionary trend in the development of Śaivite thought ultimately blossoms and fructifies in what is called the Trika Śaivism, or what popularly is known as Kāśmīra Śaivism. It is, in contrast to other schools of Śaivism, so rich in metaphysical thought as to be universal in its approach to the existential problems of life. The Trika is so synthetic in its approach as to have with ease amalgamated idealism with realism, which means that it discards such standpoints that are either rigid or extreme. It does not totally subscribe, as does Advaita Vedānta or some schools of Buddhism, to such forms of idealism that would reduce the world we perceive to the category of illusion. It also has not given in, as do Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika or Mīmāṃsā, to such forms of realism that consider the world of matter so real as to be eternal. Avoiding the extreme standpoints of both realism and idealism, it accepts the both systems to be valid when shorn off rigidity. As a realist, the Trika accepts the world as a real manifestation of the Absolute, which means that its ontological status is not like the objects of a dream or of illusion. However, the world is not a self-caused entity. It is a manifestation of the Absolute—and the nature of the Absolute is said to be consciousness and bliss, and which in theological language is referred to either as Paramaśiva or Maheśvara. This Absolute as consciousness is endowed with what technically is called vibration (*spanda*), which means that the absolute consciousness is characterized by a kind of stir. Insofar as the phenomenal world is concerned, it always exists in an unmanifest state within the Absolute. The appearance of the universe occurs in stages in the manner of reflection in a mirror.

The mirror, however, bears the reflection of objects that are outside it, whereas in the case of the Absolute it is not so, because Paramaśiva bears the reflection of its own powers. While reflecting the universe, Paramaśiva thereby conceals his essential nature. It is as Godhead that the Absolute displays his powers of emanation, preservation, reabsorption, concealment, and revelation.

All these activities of the Absolute as Godhead eventuate because of his unlimited freedom (*svātantrya*). Had Paramaśiva been destitute of absolute autonomy, then he would be no more Absolute God. Being completely independent, God thereby is the sole cause of the universe in the sense of it being the objective manifestation of his divine powers. Since Absolute is the sole reality, so his powers, which constitute his essence, are also real, which means that the universe as a manifestation of his powers, too, is real. While consisting of blissful consciousness and powers, the Absolute in the process of self-manifestation as the universe does not undergo any kind of change or modification. It is the static aspect of reality, which theologically is spoken of as being Śiva. It is the creative aspect of the Absolute that is referred to as Śakti. It is through this aspect that the Absolute as Godhead engages in the cosmic activities of emanation, preservation, reabsorption, concealment and revelation. It is these two aspects, namely, of Śiva and Śakti, of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, which are constitutive of the Absolute. It is this revolutionary interpretation of Trika Śaivism concerning the non-dual Absolute that has enriched Indian philosophy enormously.

The Trika Śaivism has not only been revolutionary in the field of philosophy but has equally been revolutionary insofar as social aspect of religion is concerned. It rejects the religious differences based on caste, sex or creed. Every seeker, no matter what his religion or caste may be, is allowed to have access to the theoretical knowledge and practical discipline that it propounds. Being pragmatic, the Trika lays much more emphasis on the practical discipline of religion than on mere logic-chopping knowledge. It rejects such forms of austere or rigorous religious discipline that are tortuous and pain-giving. On account of such an orientation it has not accorded much importance to the order of monks. It believes that one can reach the goal of self-realization simply by

being a good householder. Rejecting the śramaṇic mode of renunciation, it is but natural that the Trika would feel no need for the use of such religious symbols as, for example, ochre-robe, matted hair, ashes, etc. The Trika recognizes the validity of worldly life, and that is why it maintains that through sensual enjoyment (*bhoga*) one can reach the goal of transcendent bliss (*mukti*).

The Trika also prescribes for its adherents such a mode of life that is centered on the practice of meditation. It differs from such practices of meditation that attempt at suppressing the functioning of the mind. Instead of suppressing, it believes that the mind be trained so gently as would make it spontaneous and easeful. While enjoying the sensual pleasures, the aspirant is asked to keep his mind focussed and in the state of concentration. A mind that is concentrated can avoid the pitfalls of distraction and diffusion. It is in the light of this concern that such seekers alone are favoured with initiation who are focussed and one-pointed. An aspirant who, while enjoying the pleasures of the senses, remains uninterruptedly immersed in an inward absorption that has the possibility of actualizing such a psychological state in which he can experience the bliss of the divine delight of identity with Paramaśiva. Accordingly, aspirant gains access to the unlimited bliss of the Self through the joy that the senses offer.

The Trika is not such a religious system of thought and praxis that either prescribes or prohibits the use of such ingredients or practices that are considered as being subversive like, for example, the five *makāras*, which are wine, meat, fish, fried beans, and sexual intercourse. In certain tantric systems the use of such prohibited items is considered essential for overcoming the base tendencies within an individual. It is a viewpoint that is based on the axiom: poison kills the poison or diamond cuts the diamond. The Trika does not prohibit the use of such items for the simple reason that it considers everything to be the manifestation of the Lord. If everything is the form of the Lord, then there remains nothing that has to be forbidden. The concept of what is good or evil is simply the outcome of the state of our mind. The one who has transcended the dualistic thought-pattern through self-

immersion in the Lord sees everything as being nothing but the manifest state of the Divine. Also equally the non-use of such items is not judged as being contrary to the standpoint that sees everything as being the form of the Lord. It all depends as to what is the state of one's mind. Since the Trika has formulated such a religious approach to life that is open and catholic, so it would not be presumptuous to say that the Trika spirituality is such as to be universal and in terms of which everyone can be accommodated with ease and felicity.

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The General Features of Trika Thought

Abhinavagupta appeared at that point of historical time when Śaivism, as a distinctive religio-philosophical system, had taken deep roots in the soil of Kashmir. Śaivism, at the time of Abhinavagupta (CE tenth–eleventh), had become so embedded in the psyche of Kashmiri populace that it had branched off itself into various philosophical schools of thought, such as Spanda, Pratyabhijñā, Krama, and Kaula schools. Although sufficient degree of integration among the above schools of Śaivism had been realized, yet there were existing a number of gaps of thought and practice among them that had to be bridged. It was left to the genius of Abhinavagupta to fill up these gaps, which he successfully accomplished through his magnum opus—the *Tantrāloka*, or "The Light on Tantras." This mission of synthesization derived its inspiration from the basic philosophical principles of Somānanda and Utpala as well as from the study of esoteric practices of Krama and Kaula tantric systems. Insofar as the integration of various philosophical principles is concerned, Abhinavagupta accomplished this goal by writing, in his later life, commentaries on such a fundamental philosophical text as the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, or "The Stanzas on the Recognition of God," of Utpala. Kāśmīra Śaivism, moreover, is not only a close ally of Tantrism, but is permeated by the presence of such esoteric practices that needed such hermeneutical interpretation as would become integrated into the overall philosophical framework of Trika. Prior to Abhinavagupta, these esoteric tantric practices were so scattered as to be in the state of diffusion. There was no comparable text

like the *Yogasūtras*[1] of Patañjali where one could locate them. To fill up this glaring gap, Abhinavagupta undertook the task of systematically interpreting the meaning and significance of these practices in relation to the Yoga of Kāśmīra Śaivism. It is in his *Tantrāloka* where he gave a systematic treatment to all those esoteric practices which otherwise would have remained enclosed within the secret chambers of esotericism for lack of proper interpretation and clarity.[2]

Abhinavagupta was not only a prolific writer, but was also a man of letters, of unfathomable wisdom, deep philosophical insight, an aesthetician, and above all a yogi par excellance. Whatever he wrote or commented upon is permeated by the spirit of learning and experience. He began his writing career when he had gained mastery over the various schools of Indian thought, including those of Buddhism and Jainism. He had studied the dualistic school of Śaivism, that is, the school that traces its lineage to Amardaka, from Vāmananātha, the son of Ekanātha.[3] It was from Bhaṭṭendurāja from whom Abhinava had learnt the subtle aspects of mono-dualistic philosophy of Śaivism. It was Lakṣmaṇagupta, the disciple of Utpaladeva[4] and the author of *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, who imparted necessary instructions to Abhinavagupta in the field of monistic philosophy of Śaivism. From Śambhūnātha, the great master of tantric lore, he learnt the esoteric practices of Tantrism. The school of Tantrism that Śambhūnātha represented owes its origin to Tryambakāditya. It was the daughter of Tryambakāditya who initiated the preceptorial line of this school of Tantrism.[5] Abhinava pays the highest tribute to Śambhūnātha among his teachers for having initiated him in the esoteric lore of Tantrism.[6]

Upon synthesizing all the schools of Śaivism of Kashmir into a single unit, Abhinavagupta appropriately called it the Trika, "triadic," Śaivism. Traditionally it is believed that the sources of Trika Śaivism are the sixty-four Bhairava Āgamas. These Āgamas, considered to be canonical, have been listed in the *Śrīkaṇṭhī Saṃhitā*, and have been quoted by Jayaratha in his commentary, *Viveka*, on the *Tantrāloka*.[7] Most of the Bhairava Āgamas, on account of historical upheavals, are no more extent. What we possess at this time are the two Āgamas, namely, the *Svacchanda* and the *Rudrayāmala*. Apart from the Bhairava Āgamas, there are other

Āgamic texts that too are thought to be the source of Trika Śaivism—and these texts are the eighteen Rudra Āgamas and ten Śaiva Āgamas. Among all the Āgamic texts, Abhinavagupta has relied upon, while writing the *Tantrāloka*, are the following three texts, namely, the *Vamaka Tantra*, the *Siddha Tantra*, and the *Mālinī Tantra*. The last two texts have extensively been quoted in the *Tantrāloka*, thereby indicating their importance and significance.

Most of the esoteric practices of Tantrism that we find in the *Tantrāloka*, particularly such practices of meditation as concern the six ways of apace and time, seem to have been extracted mainly from the sixty-four Bhairava Āgamas. Technically this system of meditation is called *ṣaḍadhvan*. The other meditational practice, called *kālīnaya*, "the method of Kālī," too seems to have been extracted from the Bhairava Āgamas. This meditational practice is a part and parcel of *śāktopāya*, or "the method of energy." This technique of meditation is quite complex and can be understood only by them who have been instructed by a competent teacher (*guru*) or who have become skilful in the use of this method. The esoteric aspect of this meditational technique consists of such twelve mysterious powers as would adequately express the concept of Kālī—Kālī being the representation of ultimate reality. In the Trika Śaivism Kālī, however, is conceived of differently than what occurs in the Śākta School of Tantrism in which the Feminine Principle is identified with ultimate reality. The Trika thinkers think of Kālī as being the absolute power of Śiva who, as the transcendent principle, is thought to be the embodiment of reality. It is through this power, that is, of Kālī, that Śiva as the philosophic Absolute performs the five cosmic activities of creational emanation, preservation, destruction, concealment, and disclosure.[8] The doctrines and practices of Kālīnaya have their source in the *Kramasūtra* of Siddhanātha,[9] and Abhinavagupta has discussed them threadbare in his *Tantrāloka*. The text of the *Kramasūtra* is no more available. Quotations of this text are to be found in the *Viveka* of Jayaratha. As lot of quotations from the lost texts are to be found in the *Tantrāloka*, so it has become practically a storehouse of information. In the absence of the *Tantrāloka* we would have been deprived of the knowledge of such important esoteric practices and doctrines as were contained in the now lost texts. Abhi-

navagupta, thus, has rendered a great service to humanity by preserving the lost practices in his magnum opus, namely, the *Tantrāloka.*

The Topics Discussed in the Tantrāloka

The text of the *Tantrāloka* is encyclopaedic in range and depth. The published text consists of twelve volumes. The essential features of Trika Śaivism have at length been discussed in the various volumes of the *Tantrāloka.* It is in the first chapter of the *Tantrāloka* in which the basic characteristics of Trika Śaivism have been dealt with. The second chapter concerns itself with the significance of what technically is called the *anopāya,* or a method that may be termed as being no-method on account of non-involvement of any kind of mental or physical exertion. This method of liberation is called as being non-method because, while following the course of this method, a Śaiva yogin is so highly advanced spiritually as to be in no need of following any kind of device for the attainment of liberation. On account of the grace of Śiva the yogi has the spontaneous experience of liberation and in terms of which the fetters of bondage are recognized as being no fetters. This method is considered to be the highest on account of it being totally the result of divine grace. Insofar as the third chapter of the *Tantrāloka* is concerned, it concentrates its attention on another important method, which closely resembles the no-method, namely, the *śāmbhavopāya,* or "the method that pertains to Śiva." Although little mental exertion in terms of meditation is involved in it, yet this method too is the result of divine grace (*anugraha, prasāda*). Also the concept of *mātṛkā,* or what may be called the un-understood mothers, is discussed along with the method of Śiva. The *mātṛkās* as un-understood mothers are seen to be the embodiment of Sanskrit letters, which symbolically represent the power of divine generation. As letters, the *mātṛkās* constitute mantras, and mantras are such "forces" that unlock the mystery of existence. The letters, in the form of words, are responsible in being the source of the gross phenomena. It is so because the words are the source of cognition in terms of which ideas or concepts are identified with knowledge. It is through word-knowledge that we come to know the world that is outside of consciousness. The first chapter

constitutes the first volume, whereas the second and third chapters constitute the second volume of *Tantrāloka*.

As the first two volumes of *Tantrāloka* concern themselves with the discussion of the no-method and the method pertaining to Śiva, so the next two volumes, that is, the third and the fourth, take into consideration the lower two ways of salvation, namely, the *śāktopāya*, "the method that pertains to energy," and the *āṇavopāya*, "the method that is limited or individualised." The fourth chapter, which constitutes the third volume, not only explains the method that pertains to energy, but also discusses the tantric concept of twelve Kālīs, or "the twelve energetic modes of the Goddess." Also in this chapter is taken into consideration the philosophic notion of "reflection" (*pratibimbavāda*). The doctrine of reflection is used as a philosophic devise for explaining as to how Śiva, while manifesting himself as the universe, is not at all effected by change or modification in the same manner as reflection in a mirror does not affect the object that is reflected. The theory further establishes the fact that the reflection and the reflected, though appearing to be different, are, in fact, identical in terms of their being-ness. Thus the presence of Śiva is reflected in the manifest realm in the same manner as one's reflection is reflected in a mirror. Insofar as the fifth chapter is concerned, it explains and discusses the contours of the method that is individualised. The chapter begins with a discussion about the unique features of Śaiva techniques of meditation (*dhyāna*). The Śaiva techniques of meditation radically differ from the ones that have been enunciated in the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali. The Śaiva meditation is characterized by a pictorial visualization of one's own inner potencies or forces. The meditator, while visualizing pictorially these internal forces, correlates them to the cosmic activities of creational manifestation, preservation, withdrawal, concealment, and revelation of Śiva. The meditator, through the process of visualization, arrives at a point of heightened experience whereby complete identity between the individual consciousness and the Cosmic Consciousness is experienced. Also in this method the meditator is asked to focus his concentration upon the *śakticakra*, or what may be called the collective group of energies, which also is known as the *kālīnaya*, or "the method pertaining to Kālī." The concentration upon the collective group

of energies is so focussed as would result in the emergence of a state in which the so-called various internal forces are integrated in the womb of Cosmic Energy. This method of meditation has also been given the nomenclature of being "the yoga of intellect" (*buddhiyoga*). Next to the method of *śāktopāya* comes the *āṇavopāya*, or "the individualised method," which is meant for the beginner, and therefore is considered to be inferior to the above-mentioned methods. In this method the meditator is asked to engage in such preliminary practices that are easy to practice. In order to stabilize his concentration, the meditator is advised to practice the specific type of *prāṇāyama* "or the breath control" that has been devised by Trika Śaivism. The Trika technique of breath-control is quite different from the one prescribed by the *Yogasūtra*. Technically the Trika system speaks of this technique as the *uccārayoga*, or "the yoga of emergence." The technique is so devised as would enable the meditator to concentrate on the five functions of breath (*prāṇa*)—and the five currents of animation are the *prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna*, and *vyāna*. The meditator who gains proficiency in this technique is expected to have six types of blissful experiences, which are the *nijānanda, nirānanda, prāṇānanda, brahmānanda, mahānanda*, and *cidānanda*. The highest possible blissful experience from the practice of this meditational technique is termed as *jagadānanda*.

The next four volumes of *Tantrāloka*, that is, from volume four to seven, consist of seven chapters, that is, from chapter six to twelve. In these volumes one of the most important cosmological doctrine of "six ways" (*ṣaḍadvan*) of space and time has thoroughly been discussed. The meditational techniques that are used in relation to six ways are jointly termed as belonging to the external aspects of yoga (*bāhya-yoga*). The meditator, while meditating upon the six ways of space and time, concentrates on such meditative objects that are external to consciousness. The sixth and seventh chapters delineate not only such meditative techniques that are used in relation to time, but also the esoteric aspects of mantra. Thus is explained as to how mantras correlate themselves to the movement of breath that occurs in the context of time. This type of meditation is called *cakrodaya*, or "the emergence of the wheel." The eighth chapter of *Tantrāloka* explains the Trika cosmology.

The basic cosmological structure of Trika Śaivism is based upon the twenty-five Sāṅkhya categories of existence (*tattva*). It, however, adds eleven more categories, and thereby taking it upto thirty-six. The highest category is that of Paramaśiva and the lowest one is the phenomenal world. Apart from our empirical world, Trika also believes in the existence of numerous realms, and these realms are inhabited by beings that are invisible to our naked eye. It is in the context of Trika cosmology that such tantric deities in this chapter are discussed who are supposed to be ruling over these various realms. The ninth chapter concerns itself with such theological issues as, for example, the problem of creation, the appearance of three types of impurities (*malas*), nature of impure beings and of impure realms. Also the philosophical problem of causation is discussed. The Trika mainly follows the Sāṅkhya concept of causation, which believes in the presence of effect in the cause (*satkāryavāda*). Also light is thrown upon the nature of beings of various realms, and thereby is also discussed their respective practices and powers. Also the notion of *kāla* or time in relation to space is discussed. Also the technical detail has been furnished as to how *kāla* has to be made use of when meditating upon space.

The chapters thirteenth and fourteenth of *Tantrāloka* discuss the theological concept of grace (*śaktipāta*). The Trika Śaivism of Kashmir has been termed as the religion of grace, as it is in and through divine grace that the seeker of salvation is enabled to reach his soteric goal of liberation in terms of realizing his unity with supreme consciousness, namely, Paramaśiva. Grace is said to be of three kinds, namely, intense, medium, and slow. Each kind of grace gives rise to a result that befits it. Insofar as chapters fifteen to twenty-seven are concerned, they mainly discuss such tantric rituals that have philosophical significance and meditative function. Also such rituals are discussed that are used in various types of tantric initiation (*dīkṣā*). The twenty-eighth chapter discusses such tantric rites which a *tāntrika* adept makes use of in his daily worship. The twenty-ninth chapter takes into consideration the important esoteric practices of Kaulism, which basically follows the left-hand tantric path (*vāmācāra*).

The last volume of *Tantrāloka*, namely, the twelfth consists of

eight chapters, that is, from thirtieth to thirty-seventh. In this volume various kinds of *mantras* and *maṇḍalas* have been discussed. The most esoteric practices have not been openly discussed. They are explained in a language that is ambiguous. The Trika system of thought is discussed thoroughly, and it is pointed out that it is such a system of religious thought that supersedes all other systems.

As the text of *Tantrāloka* is abstruse, so it cannot be under stood without the help of a good commentary. Fortunately we possess a detailed commentary on the *Tantrāloka* by Jayaratha (twelfth century), which is known as *Viveka*. This commentary of Jayaratha is of immense help in understanding the abstruse topics of both theory and practice. The commentary is also a storehouse of quotations of such tantric texts that are no more available. Jayaratha also wrote an another commentary on a tantric text, namely, on the *Vāmakeśvarīmata*, a text belonging to the Kaula tantric school.

The Nature of Bondage

Fundamental to all schools of Indian thought is the belief that man's empirical existence is characterized by bondage, which in the language of Trika means the non-recognition of oneself as being essentially free and identical with the Supreme Being. And on account of this non-recognition concerning one's essential nature, the empirical individual experiences every kind of limitation, and consequently suffers from the experience of pain of non-freedom. This state of conditioned existence is termed as bondage. The cause for this human bondage is said to be ignorance (*avidyā*) and action (*karman*).[10] It is the primordial ignorance concerning the nature of reality that terminates in such actions that bind an individual to the peg of transmigration. The Trika Śaivism differs radically from other schools of thought, particularly from the school of Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, with regard to the problem of ignorance. The term that the Trika school uses for ignorance, is that of *a-jñāna*, which, when translated, means such knowledge that is finite or limited. Ignorance, thus, does not mean, as it does for Advaita Vedānta school, total absence of knowledge (*na-jñāna*). For the Trika ignorance denotes such a form of knowledge that is characterized by finitude. It is a limited

knowledge of limited beings. As a result of this finite or insufficient knowledge an individual erroneously identifies himself with that that, too, is limited or finite. Consequently, he equates himself with his physical body or with the products of materiality like the intellect or empirical ego. The limited knowledge we as empirical beings have owes its existence to the erroneous perspective we entertain. It is not thus wrong to say that it is the sense of finitude of self-consciousness that is constitutive of empirical knowledge. In other words, it is the sense of finitude of consciousness that is thought to be the substratum or underlying principle of what the Trika calls ignorance. It is ignorance, or insufficient knowledge, that is seen as the main cause of human bondage. As a bound being, an individual existent always identifies his self-consciousness with finitude.

Ignorance, according to the Trika, is of two kinds: innate (*pauruṣa*) and intellectual (*bauddha*).[11] The innate ignorance is characterized by an orientation in terms of which an individual experiences himself as being limited and finite. This sense of limitation debars him from experiencing himself as infinite and unlimited. Finding himself limited, and thereby devoid of real freedom, the individual subject accordingly is subjugated to the temporality of the flow of space-time.[12] It is the subjection to the flow of temporality that really constitutes what may be called non-freedom or bondage of space-time existents. For the Trika thinkers it is the sense of limited individuality, which is caused by innate ignorance, that really obstructs the awareness of infinitude. This sense of being limited results in the rise of the law of restriction (*niyati*), which is the basic feature of temporal existence. As empirical beings, it is the law of restriction that governs us.

The second type of ignorance, namely, the intellectual one, expresses itself in terms of conceptual limitations. Solely depending on his intellect, an embodied existent thinks of himself as well as of his capacities in terms of space and timebound concepts. The limited conceptual knowledge that an individual has of himself leads him to think that his essential nature is as limited and finite as is of any object of Nature. As a self-reflecting being, an individual identifies his consciousness with his empirical ego. This limited self-awareness comes to be on account of the finite conceptual

knowledge. This kind of ignorance, in short, consists of mental confusion in relation to one's own true nature.

This dyadic classification of ignorance does not mean that they are independent of each other.[13] The intellectual ignorance, for example, cannot find its proper expression unless supported by innate ignorance. This mutual support determines their dependence upon each other. It is their mutuality that really is responsible in subjecting an individual being to such worldly experiences that fundamentally are painful. It is the totality of such experiences that is termed as being sāṃsārika, viz., transmigratory. It is legitimate and proper for an individual to seek such a mode of existence that is completely free from the sāṃsārika pain. The Trika system recognizes that the soteric goal of freedom from pain is possible only upon the elimination of the above two types of ignorance. There is the possibility that the preceptor may, through his miraculous powers, cause the destruction of innate ignorance in the disciple, yet, according to the *Tantrāloka*, mental confusion may continue its existence on account of the continuance of intellectual ignorance.[14] Prevalence of ignorance will, however, continue to the extent the seeker continues to entertain erroneous intellectual understanding of reality. The seeker, according to the Trika, has the possibility of overcoming ignorance per se provided he gets himself initiated in the esoteric path of Trika Śaivism. The destruction of ignorance, however, is dependent to what extent the seeker successfully advances in his spiritual quest. It is the inner spiritual development that enables the seeker to gain such spiritual powers whereby ignorance may disappear by itself.

As the function of ignorance is to conceal, so the function of knowledge (*jñāna*), as an opposite of ignorance, is to reveal that that is hidden or concealed. It is on account of the revelatory function of knowledge that it has been equated with the luminosity of light. It is consciousness that alone has the power of revealing the object of knowledge, and accordingly consciousness is termed as being characterized by luminosity (*prakāśa*). Like ignorance, knowledge, too, has been classified into two types, namely, knowledge that is innate (*pauruṣa*) and knowledge that is intellectual (*bauddha*). The form of knowledge that terminates in

the elimination of all forms of ignorance is said to be intuitive (*pratibhā*). Mere intellectual knowledge has no capacity of giving rise to the transcendent knowledge that is ultimate and final. This is so because intellectual knowledge is dependent upon the subject-object duality—and the knowledge that is contingent has no possibility of eliminating ignorance in toto.[15] Insofar as innate knowledge is concerned, it is of intuitive nature. On account of its intuitive character, it arises by itself spontaneously.[16] Free from conceptual duality, innate knowledge thereby has the power of removing all such coverings that conceal reality. The emergence of this knowledge is actualized the moment the limiting individuality of an individual melts away. Upon the disappearance of individuality, and upon the appearance of intuitive knowledge, the seeker has the experience of reality as pure and infinite I-consciousness (*saṃvid*). This transcendent experience of reality as being pure I-consciousness results in what in theological terms is called liberation while alive (*jīvanmukti*) and liberation after death (*videhamukti*).[17]

While analyzing the nature of ignorance as well as of knowledge, it is but natural for the Trika thinkers to speak of the former as being the cause of bondage and of the latter that of liberation. Since Trika Śaivism adheres to the monistic philosophic viewpoint, it is but natural for it to say that an individual being is basically ontologically non-different from ultimate reality, which is interpreted as being of the nature of pure consciousness. It is on account of ignorance that the individual being thinks of himself as limited, or takes the limited entities as the basis of his Self. This erroneous apprehension of the Self as being limited is equated with ignorance. As the nature of ignorance is to conceal, so it gives rise to a form of knowledge that is erroneous. It is this erroneous knowledge concerning the nature of reality that really is seen as the cause of bondage. Ignorance, thus, does not denote the absence of knowledge. Rather it signifies incomplete or insufficient knowledge about reality. Were ignorance to mean complete absence of knowledge, then there would be no possibility for knowledge to emerge. Since such a situation has never been experienced, it means that each individual being has some knowledge as to what reality is.

The question that confronts us at this point is the following:

Why is it that some individuals develop keen interest in the ways and means that are supposed to terminate in the realization of perfect knowledge concerning ultimate Reality, whereas in some other individuals we discern the absence of such an interest? The stock-in-trade answer that the Trika gives concerning this question is to resort to theological principle of grace rather than to rational explanation. They who seek the soteric knowledge of liberation are led on this path by the grace (*anugraha*) of Śiva.[18] It means that the seeker's search for liberative knowledge is basically the result of divine grace that is free and gratuitous. An individual by itself has no capacity of intensifying his desire for divine knowledge. It is grace alone that saves an individual from the perdition of sāṃsārika bondage.[19] It can be pointed out that this divine determinism in terms of grace robs man of his free will and autonomy, even though it may be a limited one. Just as liberation is seen the result of divine grace, so bondage too is viewed as the result of divine concealment. Both these processes of revelation (that is, grace) and concealment (that is, ignorance) are termed as the divine play of the Lord. The Lord, while concealing his divine nature, manifests himself as a bound individual. The individual being breaks up the barriers of his boundness the moment he recognizes (*pratyabhijñā*) his essential nature to be non-different from that of Śiva. What it amounts to saying is this that an individual being is essentially and ontologically divine.

Insofar as the nature and content of ignorance is concerned, it has been explained and interpreted diversely by different schools of Indian thought. It is the philosophical line of thought of a thinker that really has determined his interpretation. There are two broad views that the Indian thinkers have taken up or followed with regard to the nature and content of ignorance. There is a school of thinkers who think of ignorance as being causeless and beginningless, whereas equally there is an another school of thinkers who believe that ignorance has a cause as well as a beginning. The latter are theologically theistic in orientation, and so locate the cause of ignorance in the divine play of the Lord. In ascribing the origin of ignorance to the divine play of the Lord, these thinkers thereby can equally say that the removal of ignorance too is the play of the Lord. It is a kind of hide-and-seek game that God seems to be

playing with the inhabitants of the world. The former school, while not ascribing any cause to ignorance, terms it as being inexpressible. Although believing ignorance to be beginningless, it can be negated through the revelation of knowledge.

One of the oldest philosophical school, namely that of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, is of the view that ignorance is characterized by the sixteen wrong elements of logical reasoning. In contrast to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, we have the Sāṅkhya-Yoga school that adheres to the notion that ignorance comes to be on account of the mutual confusion (*aviveka*) between the individual consciousness (*puruṣa*) and the lifeless matter (*prakṛti*).[20] The Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara thinks that it is the transcendental illusion (*māyā*) that really causes ignorance to be. However, this transcendental illusion is not a real entity. It is as illusory as illusion itself. Were *māyā* to be real, then it could never be negated, which would make ignorance as an eternal entity. If ignorance is eternal, then liberation is not possible. Since ignorance is negated upon the emergence of knowledge, it means that *māyā*, too, is unreal. The orthodox Buddhists have equated ignorance with wrong views, which basically means of adhering to extreme philosophical or religious viewpoints. In contrast to the extreme philosophical or religious views, the Buddha propounded the Middle Way. The Middle Way doctrine is contained in the Four Noble Truths. The Mahāyāna Buddhists, however, broadened their interpretation with regard to ignorance. The Mādhyamika school of Nāgārjuna would say that ignorance neither exists nor does not exist. If we negate or affirm one view, we thereby affirm or negate the other view. The purpose of the Middle Way is to have no view at all. This negative approach did not satisfy the Yogācāra school. For the Yogācārins consciousness is momentary. In its momentary flow consciousness manifests itself as an ego in different individuals. This appearance of consciousness as ego is determined by the past impressions that remain stored in what is called "the storehouse-consciousness" (*ālaya-vijñāna*). Insofar as these subconscious impressions will remain unexhausted, to that extent consciousness as a momentary flow will transmigrate from one existence to another. These subconscious impressions are said to be the basic constituents of ignorance.

The Trika understanding concerning ignorance is derived from its absolutistic theism. Although affirming reality to be non-dual, yet reality is not equated with philosophic impersonalism. The Absolute is not only pure consciousness, but also a reflecting consciousness, which means that the nature of consciousness is not only luminous, but also dynamic. This philosophic conceptuality concerning reality is, at the popular level of thought, projected in terms of dyadic couple: Śiva and Śakti. In theological terms this philosophic Absolute as consciousness (*prakāśa*) and cognizing power (*vimarśa*) is termed as God or Lord. For a Trika Śaiva the cause of ignorance is none other than the divine play of the Lord itself. The manifest universe is nothing but the self-manifestation of the Lord.[21] This entire process of self-manifestation of the Lord as the manifest universe constitutes the drama of divine play. Moreover, it is one of his cosmic activities to manifest himself as the universe along with such activities as preservation, withdrawal, concealment, and revelation.[22] The process of manifestation simultaneously involves also concealment. While manifesting himself as the universe, the Lord thereby also conceals his essential nature by appearing as an atomized and bound-being. This process of concealment of the Lord is equated with the epistemic ignorance.[23] As a bound-being, the individual experiences himself as being a distinct entity. It is as a distinct entity that the individual may be considered as the creation of God.

The Nature of Liberation

Liberation and bondage are two opposite as well as contrasting entities. It is upon the negation of bondage that liberation is experienced. That which has the possibility of being transcended cannot at all be termed as being real, because the real, being indivisible, can never be negated. It means that actually liberation and bondage, from the ultimate standpoint, are not at all opposites. Were both to be treated as real, then we can never have the experience of liberation. Since none is actually real, it means that the so-called atomized individual exists always in the state of liberation. The problem lies in not recognizing the fact that bondage is not real. Were not the case such, then liberation would be an impossible goal to realize. Our experience, however, informs

us that we do experience, even at the empirical level, freedom occasionally. It would mean that bondage as limitation is not absolute, and therefore real. Bondage or ignorance will be seen to be real to the extent one remains subject to empirical mode of understanding. Insofar as linguistic tools of analysis are made use of, we shall always be prone to contrast, and so compare it with liberation. Once empirical thought processes are transcended, ignorance by itself ceases to be, which means that it no more exists as a contrasting entity. It is upon its negation that it no more exists as an opposite of freedom.

The Trika Śaivism holds the view that the existence of bondage will continue to the extent our understanding of reality is based upon misconceptions. The problem, therefore, is epistemological. The moment the epistemological confusion concerning the nature of reality is removed, that very moment liberation from bondage is realized.[24] As to how to gain access to knowledge that is absolutely correct concerning reality is dependent to what extent we have succeeded in the practice of Śaiva-yoga. It is asserted that the practice of Śaiva-yoga terminates in the attainment of that epistemological state that is known as the state of *pratyabhijñā* or "recognition." It is a state of knowledge in which the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of the Self (*ātman*) is recognized as being non-different from the Absolute (*paramaśiva*). Also through this epistemic recognition is recognized the fact that the external world is nothing but the self-manifestation or emission (*ābhāsa, visarga*) of the Absolute.[25] Moreover, this epistemic recognition results in the realization that one's consciousness, which is essentially of the same nature as that of the Absolute, is not only limitless and infinite, but also omnipotent. An adept who has attained this state of recognition is termed as the one who is liberated-while-alive (*jīvanmukta*).[26] A *jīvanmukta*, while living-in-the-world, is not however free from the impact of past deeds (*sañcita-karman, prārabdha-karman*). He will have to reap the consequences of his deeds of previous existences till they are exhausted. To remain under the impact of *karman* would mean that he is not yet completely free from the limitations of bondage. Once the *karman*-impact is exhausted, a *jīvanmukta* realizes perfect identity with the Absolute, which means that he is now entitled to enjoy all the divine bounties. The state of perfect

identity with the Absolute comes to be upon the abandonment of embodied existence, that is, after death. This absolute form of liberation is technically called the *videhamukti*, or "liberation-upon-death.[27] A *jīvanmukta*, in contrast to a *videhamukta*, has no possibility of having the experience of divine omnipotence and omniscience on account being an embodied existent.[28]

There is, however, a higher state of liberation that a *jīvanmukta* has the possibility of gaining as an embodied existent, and this state is called *samāveśa*, or "submergence." This liberative state arises unexpectedly. In this state an aspirant has the perfect experience of identity with the Absolute. It is a state of experience in which the aspirant's consciousness, as it were, is seized by the Absolute. While being conscious of his individuality, the aspirant simultaneously experiences as if his individual consciousness is being transmuted into the Absolute.[29] This experience of submergence of individual consciousness into the Absolute results in the recognition that the so-called individual consciousness is non-different from divine consciousness. The experience of submergence also terminates in the realization of supernatural powers (*siddhis*). For a *jīvanmukta* of this type there are two courses open to him at the end of his earthly journey: He either chooses total absorption in the Absolute or he may incarnate himself as a supernatural being for the purpose of extending help to those who seek liberation. This latter course of action seems to be based upon the Bodhisattva model that the Mahāyāna Buddhists have propounded. It is a model that teaches the abandonment of desire for personal salvation for the sake of others.

Apart from *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*, there is an another type of liberation, which is known as the *kramamukti*, viz., liberation by degrees. It is such a type of liberation as would be completely dependent upon the grace of the Lord. The grace, however, is of such slow intensity that no possibility exists for immediate or spontaneous liberation from bondage. While practicing Śaiva-yoga, the aspirant does not develop such a spiritual capacity that will enable him to loosen, in one go, the grip of impurities. Upon death the aspirant of such a path has the possibility of entering into a divine abode that corresponds to the spiritual stage he has attained prior to his death. Upon entering the divine abode he,

with the aid of the presiding deity of the abode, may be able to eliminate all such impurities that bar him from gaining access to liberation. The aspirant, in a graduated manner, moves to different higher divine abodes, and ultimately reaches a state whereby he merges in the Absolute.[30] This model, too, has an equivalent in the Pure Land Buddhism, which believes that salvation comes through faith rather than self-effort. Realizing the limitations of a human being, the Pure Land Buddhists arrived at the conclusion that the grace of Amitābha Buddha alone has the power of freeing man from his bonded condition. They who have faith in the saving grace of Amitābha, enter, upon their death, the Western Paradise. As Amitābha is the presiding Buddha of this heavenly realm, so he enables his believers to arrive at the ultimate salvific state of *nirvāṇa*. It is exactly what the Trika seems to be propounding in the context of its theory of *kramamukti*.

The Nature of Reality

Most of the Vedic schools of thought adhere to a philosophical viewpoint that may be termed as realistic pluralism. As realists, they believe in the reality of more than one entity. The oldest realistic school is that of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. This school of thought believes in the existence of several elements like atom, soul, mind, time, space, God, and so on. The other realistic school is that of Mīmāṃsā, or "the school of exegesis." Being a believer in strict realism, this school agrees with Nyāya on many points. The other realistic school is that of Sāṅkhya-Yoga, which believes in the eternal existence of matter (*prakṛti*) and soul (*puruṣa*). Matter in itself is insentient. This insentient matter begins to evolve itself into the manifest categories of existence the moment there is disturbance among the three innate constituents of it, which are termed as peaceful (*sattva*), passionate (*rajas*), and inert (*tamas*). Due to the disturbance in the equilibrium of the constituents, one of the constituent dominates the other two. It is this disturbance that really provides the initial movement to primordial materiality to evolve itself into the manifest categories of existence. While undergoing the process of evolution, soul, which is non-objective and pure consciousness, somehow comes in contact with insentient materiality. As a consequence of this contact the soul thereby gets

imprisoned in what is called the embodied existence. While in the prison-house of matter, the soul's purity is not affected at all. It remains as pure as it was prior to its encagement. The relationship between the soul and matter is of the same nature that occurs between an object and its reflection in a mirror. The involvement of soul with matter therefore is not real but apparent. The theory of the three constituents has also been interpreted in terms of qualities (*guṇa*) of an entity. The nature of an entity is either good, energetic or harmful. If seen from a psychological point of view, man's character is either good, active, or evil. In its application to ethics, the theory tells us that actions are either good, passionate or evil. The theory, thus, has influenced every aspect of Indian philosophical thinking. No school of Indian thought has escaped from the far-reaching influence of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism of the south also follow this realistic pluralism of the Sāṅkhya.

Buddhism as a heterodox school of thought does not at all encourage any kind of search for a metaphysical reality. The early Buddhists were not only realists, but were analytical realists. As realists, they believed in the existence of elements. As empiricists, they rejected the existence of such entities that could not be verified empirically. For them the phenomenal entities exist but exist momentarily. Whatever there is, is of momentary existence. Insofar as human existence is concerned, it is simply a psychophysical complex. No permanent entity like the self exists within man. Man is simply a bundle of ever-changing aggregates. As to how the world has come into existence, is due to the chain of causation. Thus the principle of first cause is eliminated once-for-all. Insofar as human subjectivity is concerned, it consists of factors that are as momentary as are the objectives ones. Since this naïve realism could not satisfy the inner yearnings of man, it was accordingly abandoned in favour of critical philosophy upon the emergence Madhyamaka school of thought. This school of thought was so radical that it neither affirmed nor denied the existence or non-existence of anything. Since nothing can affirmatively or negatively be said about reality, it is better to remain silent. This silence concerning reality was identified with the Buddha's Middle Way doctrine, which maintained the avoidance of extreme standpoints,

whether philosophical or ethical. Further the Mādhyamikas interpreted the avoidance of extremes as denoting the Buddha's theory of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). The thrust of this doctrine is that the phenomenal entities do not arise by themselves or through the other. The arising of phenomenal entities occurs through the principle of interdependence. This doctrine of interdependence is graphically depicted in what is called the chain of causation. As phenomena arise interdependently, it means that they are destitute of an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). That which is devoid of innate nature is, according to the Mādhyamika thinkers, identical with Emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Insofar as the Absolute is concerned, we can say nothing about it, as it transcends every mode of thought. It is Emptiness alone that indicates as to what the Absolute is. As both the Absolute and the world are identical with Emptiness, they thereby are non-different from each other, which means that *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are one and the same. This radical negativism, however, could not last for long, and accordingly a new school of thought came into existence, namely, the Yogācāra school. The Yogācāra school, being idealistic in orientation, endeavoured to harmonize the naïve realism of early Buddhism with the critical philosophy of Madhyamaka. Instead of laying its eggs in one basket of Emptiness, the Yogācāra postulated the existence of Mind-only. Insofar as the world outside is concerned, it exists to the extent it is being perceived by the mind. The objective world is to be treated as a mere representation. Mind or consciousness, however, is as momentary as any other aggregate. Even this idealism of the Yogācāra could not satisfy the religious yearning of an average Buddhist. Ultimately a kind of theism as well as philosophical monism was allowed to emerge. The theistic orientation gave hope to the ordinary believer that he has the possibility of gaining access to *nirvāṇa*, whereas monism ushered in a philosophical outlook in terms of which each sentient being was seen potentially to be a Buddha.

The doctrine of momentariness is so universalized as to lead to the conclusion that no permanence can be established in any empirical category. The momentary existence of empirical categories also means that there is no permanent substratum that

may be seen as the basis of change. Instead each empirical entity is generated in a moment and, while generating as its replica another entity, passes away in a moment. This process of momentary generation and destruction goes on endlessly. Nothing endures beyond a third moment. It is this perspective which the Yogācārins have applied to consciousness. For them consciousness is as momentary as any empirical entity. The momentary existence of consciousness expresses itself in terms of mental states and physical entities. For the Hīnayāna Buddhists the momentary flow is of two kinds: (a) mind and mental states and (b) matter and material entities. Accordingly the conclusion that is arrived at is this: No metaphysical entity is to be found beyond the momentary flow of mind and matter. It is this view of flux or change that has prevented most of the Buddhists from embarking upon an ontological journey with regard to the nature of Being.

The sectarian Hindu religious schools uphold their own respective views concerning the nature of reality. The Vaiṣṇava school of Vallabha claims to be monistic in orientation, yet on investigation the claim does not stand the logical test. Vallabha's philosophical views are closer to the views of another Vaiṣṇava thinker, namely, Rāmānuja. Insofar as Vīraśaiva school is concerned, it is difficult to say as to what they mean by *sāmarasya*. The concept of *sāmarasya* is so ambiguous that we are unable to tell about the relation that occurs between the liberated soul and Śiva. Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, although monistic in its orientation, is not sufficiently theistic.[31]

The Trika Śaivism of Kashmir, while upholding monistic theism, thinks that the Absolute is the ontological substratum of all that that is manifest. The Absolute, due to its absoluteness, is beyond the reach of empirical or rational categories of thought. The Absolute as transcendent can neither be explained nor expressed in terms of intellectual concepts. Whatever rational knowledge we may gather about the Absolute, it is always in terms of approximations. The Absolute is unnamable, and so we cannot speak of it as being Śiva or Śakti.[32] Whatever linguistic or conceptual formulation we may formulate concerning the Absolute, it is never absolutely real or authentic.[33] This is so because the intellectual formulations about the Absolute are always determined by the

restrictions that space-time imposes upon the intellect's capacity to know. As the Absolute is transcendent to the space-time continuum, so the intellect, which operates within the framework of space-time, has no capacity or power to conceive as to what the Absolute is in itself.[34] It is this non-conceivable Absolute that is said to be the source as well as substratum of all that that is manifest. Although non-definable in itself, the Absolute however has been defined as that that is eternal and infinite I-consciousness. As the source of everything, the Absolute thereby is everything. Being identical with every manifest category, the Absolute thereby also shines in everything as everything. Although identical with every phenomenal category, it transcends them all.

Further it is asserted that the essential nature of the Absolute is its Godhead, that is, the Absolute is God by its very nature. By identifying the Absolute with Godhead, the Trika thereby favours theism. For this reason the Trika philosophy has been termed as being theistic monism.

Insofar as ontological explanation of the Absolute is concerned, the Trika Śaivism has adopted the following philosophical approach. Every entity, whether phenomenal or numinous, owes its existence to Śiva, who is identical with the Absolute as God.[35] Śiva as absolute God is pure light (*prakāśa*), that is, spiritual light of consciousness. This light of Śiva is self-evident everywhere and in everything due to its very nature.[36] It is on account of the light of consciousness that we are able to know what is to be known. If consciousness was destitute of this light, then there would be utter darkness and the emergence of knowledge would be an impossibility. Since it is in and through consciousness that knowledge is actualized, it means that the nature of consciousness as light is self-evident. It, therefore, means that consciousness as light cannot be known by employing the empirical means of knowledge. The equivalence of consciousness with the luminous light is established by the fact that every conscious being is conscious of himself. This self-consciousness arises on account of consciousness being identical with light, that is, with revelation. As the nature of light is luminosity, so the nature of the light of consciousness is to illumine everything by its light. Light reveals that that has existence or exists. In the context of phenomenal entities it means that they depend for their

existence upon the light of consciousness.[37] To shine as well as to illumine everything that exists is the very nature of the light of consciousness.[38] Since everything shines in and through the light of consciousness, it is but the light of consciousness that shines in all manifest categories of existence.[39] This philosophical monism of Trika Śaivism is known as the *pratyakṣādvaita*, or the monism that can be perceived through the senses.[40] Light, as one of the inherent aspects of the Absolute, is infinite, sovereign, eternal, and thereby beyond space-time continuum.[41]

The Absolute as consciousness is not only light (*prakāśa*), but also cognitive reflection (*vimarśa*). The reflective aspect of the Absolute discloses its dynamic nature. It is through the power of cognition-reflection that the Absolute manifests itself in the phenomena in different shapes and forms. It is in and through reflection that the Absolute appears as phenomena. The universe as well as whatever there is in the universe is the self-manifestation of the Absolute. They who have gained perfection in Śaiva-yoga, perceive as well as experience that everything in the universe is nothing but the self-extension of Śiva himself.[42] They see the presence of Śiva not only in the manifest categories, but beyond them also. The Trika Śaivism does not attempt, as does the Advaita Vedānta, to apply the principle of indicative power of speech (*lakṣaṇa*) to such scriptural statements as, for example, *tat tvam asi* (That Thou Art). The Trika Śaivas uphold that Śiva as Absolute shines both in the world as well as beyond it. The Absolute thus is both transcendent and immanent. The Absolute, when conceived as God, is endowed with the absolute powers of will, action and knowledge.

Taking cue from the Upaniṣads, the Trika Śaivism has made an attempt at explaining the manifestation of Śiva as consciousness in psychological terms. The Absolute manifests itself not only as an objective universe, but also in and through the three states of consciousness of waking, of dreaming, and of deep sleep.[43] It is in and through its luminosity that the Absolute both pervades and transcends the objective world of phenomena. It is in the revelatory aspect of the Absolute in which has been located the cause of the universe. It is maintained that the light of consciousness continuously shines forth as well as maintains the playful drama of the

universe.[44] The entire universe is nothing but the manifestation of the light of consciousness by virtue of its nature being playful. To be playful is the basic nature of Śiva.[45] *Prakāśa,* in the process of its manifestation, does not suffer from any modification because the Absolute manifests itself in the same manner as moon is reflected in a clean pool of water.[46]

The indivisibility of the Absolute shines forth eternally due to its being of the nature of light. The luminosity of the Absolute represents its static aspect. As the essence of light is reflection, that is, stir of consciousness, so the Absolute shines forth as God through the five cosmic powers of manifestation, preservation, withdrawal, obscuration and revelation. It is the reflective aspect through which the Absolute expresses its five cosmic powers and at the conceptual level of thought this aspect is known as *śakti,* which in terms of religious devotion is symbolized by the Goddess Śakti. The Goddess, as the principle of femininity, represents the creative aspect of the Absolute. Śiva who, while representing the principle of maleness, is in itself passive and inactive, which conceptually is represented by the luminous aspect of the Absolute. It is Śakti that imparts necessary dynamism to the otherwise passive Śiva. These aspects of the Absolute—passivity and dynamism—have not to be seen as possessions. Such an understanding would entail dualism in that the possessor would be completely distinct from his possessions. For the Trika both passivity and dynamism are the essential nature of Śiva, and so have to be viewed as a single unity. As unity, they do not cause any internal division within the Absolute. Luminosity is the infinite light of absolute consciousness, whereas dynamism represents the creative activity of consciousness as light. As both passivity and dynamism are identical with the Absolute, so accordingly the Absolute is referred to as absolute consciousness (*saṃvid*). Luminosity and dynamism as Śiva and Śakti are the two aspects of Paramaśiva as consciousness (*saṃvid*). Luminosity represents knowledge, whereas dynamism represents creativity.[47]

The Absolute of the Trika is not an impersonal and abstract being. The Absolute, rather, is God, and as God he is, in the fullest sense of the word, sovereign. It is as sovereign that God engages, without depending on anything, in the five cosmic activities

of manifestation, preservation, absorption, obscuration and revelation.[48] Since the manifest is the self-emission of the Absolute, so it means that the manifest categories, prior to their manifestation, exist potentially as consciousness (*saṃvid*) in the Absolute.[49] The phenomenal categories, in their unmanifest condition, exist in terms of an integral "I" of the Absolute. The "I" of the Absolute is not to be equated with the empirical ego. It is, rather, the absolute consciousness of the Absolute. The absolute "I" has, therefore, been spoken of as being fully perfect (*paripūrṇa*) in itself.

The universe and its categories, prior to their manifestation, exist as pure Ego (*ahaṃ*) within the Absolute. Upon their manifestation, they manifest themselves as "this" (*idaṃ*). It is in terms of "this" that the Absolute appears as the variegated universe of diverse entities. While manifesting itself as the universe of diverse entities, the Absolute thereby appears as if its absolute powers of knowledge and action have been atomized. This process of appearing of the Absolute is equated with a play in which the actor, while identifying itself with the character, remains himself unchanged. The Absolute, while appearing as a limited or atomized phenomenal entity, remains in itself indivisible and same. This divine drama is enacted to keep the creational manifestation going on for aeons. At the end of each aeon, there is withdrawal, which terminates in the absorption of the manifest into the pure subjectivity of the Absolute. At the time of dissolution the non-liberated beings are pushed into the abyss of ignorance whereby the process of obscuration is actualized. While obscuring itself, the Absolute also obscures the divine potency of countless beings. When the concealing power of obscuration is removed, it is called the act of divine grace. It is through grace that the divine nature of one's self is realized. It is the five cosmic activities or powers that constitute the essential nature of the Absolute.[50]

The Nature of the Manifest

All the schools of Indian thought are of the view that cosmology and ontology are closely related to each other. Whatever the cosmological theory each philosophical school may have, it has been worked out in the context of its ontological doctrine. There

are four main cosmological theories that have been developed by the various cosmologists. One of them thinks that the phenomena are composed of elements that are subtle and exist eternally. These subtle elements that compose the universe are the atoms (*aṇu*). It is God who brings creational coherence into these elements, and thereby the creational manifestation is allowed to emerge. This theory of creation is spoken of as that of origination (*ārambhavāda*). The philosophical school of thought that adheres to the theory of origination is the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school of philosophy. This theory thinks of God as being a mere efficient cause of the universe. His function may be equated with that of a potter. As the potter fashions his various items from the existing material, namely, clay, likewise God fashions the universe out of the existing eternal atomic elements. God does not cause the universe *ex nihilo*. As an instrumental cause, God is not really the creator of the universe. Rather his role is limited to being a designer or fashioner.

The second theory of creation is that of transformation (*pariṇāmavāda*). It is the Sāṅkhya-Yoga that originally developed this theory of causation. The thrust of this theory is that the diverse component elements that are constitutive of the universe are but the modifications of the primal stuff (*mūla-prakṛti, pradhāna-tattva*). When there is absolute equilibrium among the constituents (*guṇas*) of the primal stuff, then no modificatory evolution occurs in the stuff. When there is disturbance among the constituents, which are of the nature of peace (*sattva*), of energy (*rajas*), and of dullness (*tamas*), then the primal materiality, through the process of self-modification (*pariṇāma*), passes through different phases of evolution. The primal materiality, in the process of its evolution, evolves into the various evolutes that compose the universe. The various components or categories that are constitutive of the universe are said to be a mixture of the three constituent processes. Insofar as the primal materiality is concerned, it not only is eternal, but also contains within itself all that that appears in the manifest universe. The component elements that constitute the universe do not owe their existence to a fresh creation. They are rather the mere manifestation of primal materiality. The component elements, at the time of universal dissolution, are absorbed, through the reverse process of submergence, by the primal

materiality. In this theory of causation God is completely absent. The manifest universe does not owe its existence to God. The inherent laws within the primal matter are responsible in causing the evolutionary process that results in the actualization of the objective universe. Similarly, these very innate laws cause the dissolution of the universe.[51]

The Trika Śaivism agrees with the Sāṅkhya insofar as the evolutionary process is concerned. It, however, disagrees with it on the point of causation. The Trika Śaivism does not think that the primal matter, which is insentient, is the cause of its own self-manifestation. It believes that it is God who is responsible in causing the primal matter to manifest itself as the objective universe. Further the primal matter is not an eternal entity existing by itself or outside of God. Rather it is always existing within God. It is out of itself that God emits the universe. That is why the world by the Trika thinkers is seen as the self-extension of God.

The third theory of creation is that of appearance (*vivartavāda*). The Advaita Vedānta school of Śaṅkara mainly follows this theory. According to this theory, there is actually no creation. As creation does not exist, so it appears to be existing. Since the world does not actually exist, it means that there has never been creation. What we think to be existing as the universe is, in fact, a mere appearance. This appearance of the universe is linked to dream-objects that appear in a dream. The objects of the dream appear to be real to the extent dream lasts. The objects of dream, however, disappear once the dream comes to an end. Similarly, the world appears to be real to the extent we operate under the influence of ignorance (*avidyā*). Upon the negation of ignorance, the apparent character of the universe is known. The Trika Śaivas, although non-dualists, have rejected this viewpoint with regard to the reality of the world. While accepting the world to be real, they have severely criticized all such theories that reduce the reality of the world to that of dream-objects.[52]

Insofar as the Pāśupatas, Śaivasiddhāntins and Gorakhanāthīs are concerned, they have a theistically oriented theory of creation. The conception of these schools is such as would make God a mere instrumental cause, and nothing more than that. Though it is Śiva, according to them, who is the cause of the universe, but as

cause he simply brings about modification in the primal matter, and thereby allows the creational manifestation to take place. In such a conception, God is merely seen as an efficient cause and not the actual creator. He just fashions the existing material into various designs and forms—and nothing more than that. If this is the case, then the primal matter has to be seen as the material cause of the universe, and as such an independent entity. There are, however, some from among the above schools who have identified primal materiality with Śakti, which is identified with the power of Śiva. This Sāṅkhya conception of matter via Tantrism is equated with the feminine principle, namely, the Supreme Goddess. The Goddess as the consort of Śiva is seen to constitute the creative aspect of Śiva. It is through its innate power (*śakti*) that Śiva allows the manifestation of the universe to take place.

In comparison to the above theories of creation, the Trika authors have developed their own specific theory of creation, which is known as the principle of sovereign will of God (*svātantryasiddhānta*). According to this theory, it is the sovereign will of God that really is the cause of the manifest universe. God emits the universe out of himself the moment he wills its manifestation. The willing of the manifestation of the universe is equated with the divine playfulness. To be playful is the essential nature of God. God, while giving rise to the categories of existence (*tattvas*) out of himself, is completely independent in engaging himself in this creative activity. As God emits every creational category out of himself, so it is assumed that each category, prior to its emission, must necessarily be existing within him as potency. This idea of an entity existing as potency prior to its manifestation is directly borrowed from the Sāṅkhya theory of causation. The Sāṅkhya theory of causation says that every effect, prior to its actualization, exists potentially in the cause. It amounts to saying that the entire universe exists as the very self of God, that is, infinite and eternal "I." This divine Ego as consciousness is not static or passive; it is of the nature of vibration (*spanda*). Thus supreme consciousness is equated with vibratory movement. It is on account of the vibratory nature of consciousness that God engages in the creative activity of manifestation.

The total number of manifestational categories are said to be

thirty-six. The process of manifestation occurs from Paramaśiva down to earth. The first five manifestational categories, from Paramaśiva to Śuddhavidyā or Sadvidyā, are termed as being pure (*śuddhādva*) on account of them not suffering from any kind of division of duality. Paramaśiva as Absolute appears as Śiva and Śakti: the former representing the Absolute whereas the latter Godhead. Śiva and Śakti, as it were, constitute the luminous and reflective aspects of the Absolute. The third manifestational category of pure creation is termed Sadāśiva, or "the eternal Śiva." This category of manifestation of the Absolute is equated with God when absorbed in the playful activity of creational diversity. The diversity that is found in creation is found on account of the activity of the Absolute as Sadāśiva. The fourth manifestational category is that of Īśvara, or "the Lord." The Absolute manifests itself as Īśvara when engaged in the divine functions of Godhead. Finally, we have the category of Śuddhavidyā, or "pure knowledge." The category of Śuddhavidyā is that manifestational category of the Absolute in terms of which the divine revelation as grace is accomplished. In other words, the appearance of the Absolute as pure knowledge denotes that the knowledge of this category is absolutely free from conceptual fallacies that bedevil the empirical modes of understanding. These first five manifestations of the Absolute are the fundamental appearances of emanation. It is through the total independence of the Absolute's will that the first five manifestations are accomplished. As these five manifestations are pure, so each category of pure manifestation shines as being identical with the infinite I-consciousness, which is the Absolute. From Paramaśiva to Śuddhavidyā there is no awareness of duality whatsoever.

The manifestational categories from Śuddhavidyā downward belong to the realm of *māyā*, or what is called impure creation (*aśuddhādva*). They are so-called because their function is to obscure or conceal the non-dual nature of I-consciousness. It is from the *māyā-tattva* onward that the process of manifestation becomes gross.

The obscuration of I-consciousness is determined to what degree a particular category (*tattva*) is gross. Paramaśiva, while manifesting himself in the form of gross categories, appears as a limited sentient

being, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, manifests himself, through his sovereign will, as an insentient element. The insentient element of impure creation serves as the basis of what is called insentient creation.[53] The sentient element, being covered by *māyā* or impurity, is reduced to finitude, and so accordingly is called *aṇu* (atomic) or *paśu* (bound). The bound being, on account of its limitedness and finitude, identifies I-consciousness with the finite ego or self. By imposing the sense of limitation upon itself, the non-free being differentiates himself from others in terms of his empirical identity. This sense of differentiation results in what may be called self-forgetfulness, that is, he forgets the fact that he is non-different from the Absolute, and thereby also from the other. As the impure creation is pervaded by the impurity of *māyā*, so it is Īśvara as the manifestational category of the Absolute that actualizes the process of impure creation.[54]

The Trika Śaivism rejects the Sāṅkhya theory of causality in terms of which the cause transforms itself into the effect, or should we say that the effect, prior to its actualization, is identical with the cause. The Trika rejects this theory in the context of its cosmology. If God as cause of the universe is seen transforming itself into phenomenal entities, then God suffers from internal division, which would destroy the notion of its indivisibility. Instead of Sāṅkhya theory of causal transformation, the Trika has postulated the theory of reflection (*pratibimbavāda*). According to this theory, the universe is neither the transformation of Śiva nor of his Śakti. As the nature of God is pure luminosity, so it is this luminosity which projects God as the universe in the manner an image is reflected in a mirror. While being reflected as the universe, the luminosity of God remains intact.[55] By virtue of its luminous light God thereby illumines the entire phenomena. Prior to their manifestation or emission (*visarga*), all the phenomenal entities exist in the Absolute, which is none other than Paramaśiva. Prior to their manifestation, the entire universe and entities therein shine forth as consciousness in the Absolute—and it is their transcendental state (*paramārtha-sattā*).[56] The phenomenal entities, while shining as reflection, have both rise and fall within pure I-consciousness. It is on account of this rise and fall that the phenomenal entities suffer from temporal finitude. As they are appearances of the Absolute, so they come

within the sphere of *ābhāsa*, that is, the manifest categories are of the nature of psychic light (*ābhāsa*), which shine as the lustre of luminosity.[57]

The Principle of Vibration

It was Vasugupta who, for the first time, enunciated the theory of vibration (*spanda*) in his basic text, namely, the *Śivasūtra*. The purpose of this theory is to point out that the essential nature of the Absolute is not only luminosity (*prakāśa*), but also vibration (*spanda*). It is due to its dynamic nature that the Absolute engages in creative activity by giving rise to the phenomena. Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa consolidated this conception of the Absolute as being luminous as well as dynamic in his two important texts, namely, the *Spanda-kārikā* and *Spanda-sarvasva*. Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha and Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara, through their commentorial works, clarified as to what exactly this idea of the Absolute as being dynamic signifies. The leading philosophers, like Somānanda and Utpala, accepted this conception of the Absolute as being the basic tenet of Trika Śaivism. It was, however, Abhinavagupta who integrated this philosophic conception with both the theory and practice of Trika Śaivism.

The thrust of this philosophic concept is to elucidate the point of view concerning reality as being essentially dynamic. This idea of the Absolute as being dynamic seems to have been given rise to in opposition to Advaita Vedānta. The Advaita Vedānta upholds the idea that the Absolute is sheer luminosity, which means that there is no dynamism to be found in it. Being peaceful (*śānta*) and passive, the Absolute of the Advaita Vedānta is completely destitute of dynamism. It is to counter this conception of Advaita Vedānta concerning the Absolute as being a passive witness that the Trika-thinkers inserted another dimension to it, namely, that of dynamism. It is this innate dynamism within the Absolute that, as it were, impells it to manifests itself as the universe. The Buddhist concept of matter as being dynamic seems to have influenced the Trika thinkers with regard to the nature of the Absolute.

The vibratory nature of consciousness, in the context of finite beings, carries within itself many types of psychophysical movements and activities. The diverse movements and activities of finite beings reflect, in a miniscule form, the dynamic nature of the Absolute.

The non-differentiated state of vibration is of blissful nature, and is realized in that meditative state known as *turya*, or "the Fourth." It is upon transcending the empirical states of consciousness, which are that of waking, deep sleep, and dreaming, that one arrives at the Fourth. The Fourth state is a state of spiritual revelation. There is, however, still a higher state of spiritual illumination that is known as the *turyātīta*, that is, beyond the Fourth, and so accordingly is identified with the absolute transcendental state of pure consciousness.

Insofar as the term *spanda* is concerned, it is derived from the root *spadi*, meaning, "to move a little" (*kiñcit calanā*). Abhinavagupta has equated this term in his commentary on the *Parātriṃśikā* with such spontaneous spiritual activity as pertains to pure consciousness. And this spiritual activity of pure consciousness is realizable through Śaiva-yoga.[58]

The Absolute as Paramaśiva or Maheśvara is Śiva precisely because of his being God. The Absolute is equated with Śakti on account it being the embodiment of Godhead. One of the essential aspects of Śakti is *spanda*. It is on account of *spanda* that the Absolute engages in a twofold activity with regard to the emanation of phenomena. This twofold activity of the Absolute expresses itself in the manifestation and dissolution of the universe. In the Āgamic literature the concept of *spanda* has been explained in various ways. It has been described as *sphurattā* (twinkling), *ghūrṇī* (dizziness), *ūrmī* (wave), *matsyodarī* (a throb of a fish when out of water), and so on.

The Classification of Categories and of Realms

The classification of categories of existence, right from Paramaśiva down to earth, has been made into thirty-six elements (*tattvas*). All the thirty-six categories have been reduced to five *kalās*, and each *kalā* contains within itself a certain number of categories as well as realms (*bhuvanas*) and their specific kind of existents. The total number of realms that have been accepted by the Trika Śaivism is said to be one hundred and eighteen, and these realms exist beyond the visible realm of which we are a part. Each realm is presided over by a Rudra, which is a form of Śiva, or by a Bhuvaneśvara, that is, by "the Lord of the Realm." The

nature of the existents that inhabit these realms is determined by the realm they inhabit. The existents of these realms have been classified into seven types.

The Trika Śaivism maintains that the manifestation and dissolution of these realms as well as the process of bondage and liberation of existents therein is both controlled and directed by God through his manifold absolute powers. In order to govern these realms efficiently, God seems to have delegated some of the governing powers to the presiding deities of these realms. Each presiding deity is believed to be the embodiment of some divine power.

The phenomenal manifestation occurs through certain stages of the arc of descent of the Divine, and at each stage of the descent of the Divine there are given rise to a certain number of categories. A category or element (*tattva*) is seen to be representing the essence of several akin categories. It is this essence that binds them together into a whole.[59] The essence of an element is permanent, and so remains intact at the time of universal dissolution (*pralaya*). The manifest categories, at the time of dissolution, are reduced to their respective essences. The categories emerge from these essences at the time of universal manifestation.

Even though there are various categories, yet there is, in fact, only one category, and that is, Paramaśiva. This is so because Paramaśiva not only contains within itself the essence of all the categories, but also is the essence of everything.[60] Paramaśiva, while manifesting himself as the universe, manifests himself as Śiva, Śakti, and Nara. It is on account of this triadic conceptual framework that Kāśmīra Śaivism is called the *trika*. Correspondingly the entire field of existence, too, has been classified into tripartite state of unity (*abheda*), unity-in-diversity (*bhedābheda*), and diversity (*bheda*). This classification of existence is equated with a triadic elemental division of Śivatattva, Vidyātattva, and Māyātattva. Since the path of objective meditation (*tattvādhvan*) accepts the number of categories of existence to be thirty-six, so it is this number that the Trika Śaivism accepts as constituting the manifestational realm from Paramaśiva down to earth. Further it is maintained that as the thirty-six categories have their rise and fall in Paramaśiva, so the total number of categories is thirty-seven if we include

Paramaśiva also in the totality of categories.

As the categories of existence pertain to the manifestational realm, so they are referred to as objective categories meant for intellectual reflection (*prameya-tattva*). The first five categories, from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā, are free from the distortions of *māyā*, and so are said to be pure. The beings that inhabit these realms are also pure. Due to their purity, they are aware of their divine powers. As they do not identify the self with any insentient element, they thereby are aware of their identity with the absolute I-consciousness. It is, thus, the undifferentiated awareness that is constitutive of the first five manifestational categories.

The philosophic Absolute, when viewed from a theological perspective, is identified with Paramaśiva, which is the thirty-seventh category when counted from the gross element of earth upward. The Absolute as Paramaśiva is described as having two innate aspects, namely, the static and dynamic. The static aspect of the Absolute corresponds to the passivity of consciousness as being a witness (*śakṣī*) or light (*prakāśa*). It is in and through the dynamic aspect that the Absolute expresses the five cosmic powers of manifestation, preservation, withdrawal, obscuration, and revelation. While manifesting itself in the form of manifest categories, the Absolute, however, remains in itself unchanged and undivided. It is the static aspect of the Absolute that really explains the indivisibility as total unity of Paramaśiva. It is in its static aspect that Paramaśiva appears as Śiva. The appearance of Śiva as Śakti occurs through its dynamic aspect.[61]

Already it has been explained that *spanda* denotes the innate resonance within Śiva as Śakti. The initial resonance is directed towards the manifestation of phenomenal categories. The actualization of this resonance results in the emergence of the categories of Sadāśiva or Sadākhya and Īśvara. At this point of manifestation the resonance expresses itself as Sadāśiva in terms of an inward movement, whereas outward movement is actualized in the form of Īśvara.[62] All the manifestational categories are contained within Śiva and shine as infinite I-consciousness. When innate resonance is directed outward, it shines forth as "this" (*idaṃ*) of I-consciousness, which indicates the sense of differentiation or duality. Upon the emergence of the sense of differentiation,

consciousness thereby shines forth as "I am this" (*ahaṃ idaṃ*) or "this is myself" (*idaṃ ahaṃ*), which means that there is the duality of subject and object.[63] This awareness of "I" as "myself" results in contrasting "myself" with the other. The sense of difference at this manifestational level is not so acute as to result in a kind of unbridgeable duality, which is the bane of empirical existence. There is both the sense of unity as well as diversity, and so this manifestational stage is termed as representing the state of unity-in-diversity (*parāparadaśā*). Since this manifestational stage hangs between complete unity and diversity, so it has appropriately been called an intermediate stage of manifestation.[64] When there is the experience of unity-in-diversity (*bhedābheda*), it is taken to be the fifth manifestational category called Śuddhavidyā or Sadvidyā. In other words, it is at the level of fifth manifestational category that the experience of unity-in-diversity is actualized.[65]

This process of manifestation of the Divine up to the fifth category is termed as being pure on account of the absence of dichotomizing power of *māyā*. Thus this entire process of manifestation up to the fifth category is termed as being pure. Once the process of manifestation moves forward, there then begins the operation of dichotomizing power of *māyā*. This process of dichotomization itself is the creation of the Lord, or what is called Īśvara, which is the penultimate category of pure creation.[66] It is the creative will of the Lord that manifests itself in the form of *māyā*.[67] The function of the category of *māyā* is to conceal the essential nature of the Lord,[68] and on account of this obscuration the Lord appears in the form of finite beings (*aṇu*). In addition to its obscuring function, *māyā* also serves as the basic substance for further diversification of the categories of phenomena.[69] At this point it seems that *māyā* in the Trika is made to serve the same purpose that primal materiality (*prakṛti*) is made to serve in the Sāṅkhya. It is the Sāṅkhya concept of *prakṛti* that is transformed into the creative power of God in the Trika system of thought. It is the Sāṅkhya that has provided the necessary conceptual scaffolding to Trika Śaivism whereby an attempt is made to explain the process of cosmogenies as rationally as possible.

The experiencing subject, although essentially unlimited, experiences himself, within the temporal realm, as being finite

and limited. The subject's subjectivity experiences as being limited on account of the concealing veils of *māyā*. The function that is assigned to *māyā* is to conceal the essential nature of the subject's subjectivity, and the consequence of this concealment is the experience of finitude. As a result of *māyā*'s obscuring powers, the subject is deprived of the enjoyment of his own essential nature, which is that of bliss. This deprivation of self-enjoyment terminates in the agitative restlessness (*lolika*) of the subject.[70] The phenomenal subject, however, is not completely deprived of the experience of enjoyment. He does have the capacity, even though a limited one, of experiencing delight objectively through his senses. This very capacity for enjoyment indicates that the subject's subjectivity is essentially of the nature of bliss. The rays of bliss penetrate one's subjectivity the moment *māyā*'s hold loses its grip.

The limiting or obscuring powers (*kañcukas*) of *māyā* have been classified into five types. The first limiting power, called *kalā*, limits the subject's field of action, and consequently the subject remains unaware of his divine power of omnipotence. The second obscuring power of *māyā* is that of *aśuddha-vidyā* (impure knowledge). Time and space limit all forms of empirical knowledge or understanding. Whatever empirical knowledge we possess is a localized one. The limitations that *māyā* imposes upon the knowledge of the knower results in the deprivation of the subject's omniscience. The third obscuring power of *māyā* is called *rāga* (attachment). It is on account of attachment that the interests of the subject remain restricted. This restricted interest imposes such restrictions upon the subject's field of action and knowledge that he finds it difficult, nay impossible, to cross over the barriers of his embodied existence. This limited interest also indicates that the individual seems to have no liking or preference for knowledge that is transcendent or spiritual. The fourth obscuring power that *māyā* puts into operation is that of *niyati* (the law of restriction). This law of restriction expresses itself in and through the operations of what we call objective Nature. The laws of Nature operate in such a manner as would result in the curtailment of the subject's autonomy. Subject to the laws of Nature, the individual subject experiences such powerlessness that he is unable to act independently. The same is the case with knowledge. For the

acquirement of knowledge he is completely dependent either on his senses or upon the objects that seem to be existing independently of him. The individual existent, being subject to the laws of Nature, experiences himself as being dependent upon the external factors in relation to knowledge and action.[71] Finally, we have *māyā*'s obscuring power of *kāla* (time). It is on account of the obscuring power of time that the individual subject experiences himself as being finite. This experience of temporality deprives the subject of the joy of immortality. All these functions of *māyā* incapacitate the individual of knowing who he essentially is. It is upon the removal of the obscuring veils of *māyā* that the individual recognizes that he essentially is divine, that is, identical with Paramaśiva. This state of absolute knowledge results in the experience of bliss that is free from the distortions that *māyā* inserts in the process of manifestation.[72]

Paramaśiva becomes, as it were, an atomized experient on account of the concealing veils of *māyā*. The atomized condition of the Absolute is termed as the condition of *puruṣa*. In other words, a limited individual is nothing else but *puruṣa*. At this point the Trika Śaivism turns upside down the Sāṅkhya concept of *puruṣa*. For the Sāṅkhya *puruṣa* is passive, and so is in no manner involved in the operations of Nature (*prakṛti*). As *puruṣa* is pure intelligence, so it cannot, by any stretch of imagination, relate itself to that that is opposite to it, namely, matter. Although caught up in the web of embodied existence, yet its relationship with materiality is tenuous and is of the nature that occurs between an object and its reflection. For the Trika, however, the condition of embodied existence itself is given the nomenclature of *puruṣa*, which means that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, unlike the Sāṅkhya, are not seen dialectically opposed to each other, but are viewed as complementing each other. While complementing each other, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* thereby also enjoy each other. It is the divisionary power of *māyā* (*kalā*) that actualizes the emergence of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.[73] Upon its manifestation, *prakṛti* carries within itself the three strands (*guṇas*) of pleasure, pain and ignorance, which are equated with the three constituent processes of *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.* To the extent these three constituents remain in the state of equilibrium, to that extent the process of manifestation does not take place, which means that

there is no appearance of pleasure, pain or ignorance. Once this equilibrium is disturbed, there then begins the process of manifestation in terms of which the entire manifest order is given rise to. The manifest order, however, consists of entities that are either enjoyable or painful. Wherever the strand of goodness (*sattva*) is prevalent, there the limited individual has the experience of joy. This experience of limited joy is facilitated by Śiva's illuminating power (*jñānaśakti*) of goodness. The limited individual experiences pain on account of the predominance of the strand of passion (*rajas*). It is Śiva's infinite power of action (*kriyāśakti*) that really appears in the form of pain-giving strand of passion. The diversity that is constitutive of the manifest order is because of Śiva's power of obscuration (*māyāśakti*). It is through the power of obscuration that everything, at the manifest level, is reduced to the state of utter darkness—and darkness is nothing else but the concrete embodiment of ignorance.[74] Darkness represents ignorance because it veils the revealing or illuminating power of knowledge. Knowledge and light go together, whereas ignorance associates itself with the absence of light, which is but darkness.

Paramaśiva is spoken of God or Īśvara when engaged in the five cosmic activities of manifestation, preservation, dissolution, obscuration, and revelation. The objective process of manifestation begins the moment God descends to the abode of materiality. The very descent of God to this abode denotes that the equilibrium among the three constituent strands is shaken up. This disturbance among the constituent strands results in the emergence of twenty-three instrumental and objective categories.[75] God causes dis-equilibrium among the three constituent strands when he initiates a kind of stir within the womb of materiality. It is this stir within materiality that really terminates in some kind of disturbance among the constituent strands. This stir within the womb of materiality is counted as one more manifestational category between materiality and its product, namely, intelligence (*buddhi*). It is intelligence that is the first objective manifestational category. Upon the emergence of intelligence comes into being the sense of I-ness (*ahaṅkāra*). Once the sense of ego has been actualized, there then emerge sixteen categories, which are the mind, five organs

of perception, five organs of action, and five subjective elements of sound, touch, colour, taste, and smell.

The Typology of Impurity

Upon emitting out of itself the entire manifest order, the Absolute thereby atomizes itself by appearing as a limited being that is subject to the order and processes of temporality. The sense of limitedness or of temporality comes to the fore on account of impurity, which is the product of *māyā*. The basic function of impurity may be linked to the mud which, when disturbed, muddies the transparency of water. Likewise impurity puts such a veil upon the inner eye of the individual that he is unable to see clearly as to what he actually is. This veiling of the vision is called ignorance. Once impurity, in the form of ignorance, becomes operative, the individual thereby experiences ontological separation from the Absolute. It is this sense of separation that deprives the individual from recognizing himself as being essentially identical with Paramaśiva, and thereby from everything that is constitutive of the world. Impurity, thus, may be seen as that process of obscuration of free will whereby the individual remains ignorant concerning his essential nature.[76]

As impure creation is the result of *māyā*'s operation, so *māyā* leaves its imprint, in the form of basic impurity, upon the entire manifest order. The basic impurity (*mala*) undergoes a process of development, and at each stage of its development it is given a specific name. At the initial stage of its development it is known to be of atomic nature (*āṇava*). Atomic content of impurity denotes that it is of finite nature, and as such expresses itself through finite beings. The individual who is under the influence of this impurity remains forgetful about his essential nature, which is that of infinite I-consciousness.[77] The finite consciousness, in contrast to infinite consciousness (*saṃvid*), is as empty (*śūnya*) as is the vacuum within a pitcher. The very vacuity of finite consciousness tells us that its illuminating power, as it were, has been obscured to such an extent that it has lost complete capacity of revealing anything to itself.[78] The function of *āṇava-mala*, thus, is to give rise to a kind of fractured awareness within the individual that terminates in the identification of the self, which in itself is complete and perfect, with pure vacuity. There are, however, some limited beings who, though under the

influence of *āṇava-mala*, do not think of themselves to be as empty as the interior of a grave.[79]

The fundamental philosophical thesis of Trika Śaivism is that nothing exists apart from God, viz., absolute consciousness (*citi*). This thesis is explained monistically in terms of which it is asserted that God is in everything and everything is in God. This identity between the Absolute and the phenomenal categories is recognized at that level of knowledge (*vidyā*) where the operations of *māyā* are neutralized. Insofar as an individual remains under the influence of *māyā*, to that extent his mode of understanding will be dependent upon the subject-object dichotomy. For such an individual the actualization of knowledge will be impossible unless he not only objectifies his own consciousness, but also allows the objects out there to confront him. This confrontation between the knowing subject and the knowable object is actually the basis of all forms of empirical knowledge. The knowing subject, while in the process of acquiring empirical knowledge, experiences ontological difference between himself and the object that is to be known, viz., the object of knowledge, between God and himself, and thereby between God and the world. This sense of difference or of separation is the result of what technically is called "the impurity of *māyā*" (*māyīya-mala*). The impurity of *māyā* either functions together with the atomic impurity (*āṇava-mala*) or separately.[80] It is upon the foundation of atomic impurity upon which the impurity of *māyā* builds its structure, as the former is the base for every kind of impurity.

Thus far we have analyzed as to how the atomic impurity and the impurity of *māyā* operate and function. The former impurity gives rise to a sense of limitedness or finitude, whereas the latter one is responsible in creating the sense of ontological division. The third form of impurity is called the impurity of action (*kārma-mala*). This form of impurity is said to be the most awesome on account of it being the result of all the past deeds that one has performed in previous existences. Upon the maturity of deeds, the individual has to reap the required fruit of what he has done in the past. What we are at present is because of *karman*. The doctrine of *karman*, perhaps, owes its origin to the function of Nature. It is observed that nothing occurs within Nature by chance.

Whatever takes place in Nature has behind it a definite cause, which means that an event is caused by such an agency that has the possibility of being a cause. It is on this analogy of cause-and-effect that the theory of *karman* is interpreted in relation to what an individual existent does or does not do. Since every cause must terminate in an effect, it means that every action as cause must give rise to a definite corresponding effect in terms of fruit. When further elaborated, it means that our mode or station of existence is determined by the deeds that we have performed. It is this concept of action that is responsible in giving rise to the full-blown doctrine of transmigration. Since action is seen as the cause of transmigratory existence, so it is equated with impurity.

The Classification of Existents

As already pointed out above, there are various realms, and each realm is inhabited by such existents that are suitable for it. There thus is a hierarchical correspondence between the realms and the beings that inhabit them. It is the quality of the realm that really determines the quality of beings that are to inhabit it. It is within this hierarchical framework that the beings that inhabit various realms have been classified into seven types. The lowest type of being is termed as Sakala. The Sakala experient (*pramātṛn*) is at the lowest wrung of the hierarchy of structure on account him being the most impure creature among all the creatures. The experient of this type exists under the influence of all the three impurities, which are the *āṇava-mala, māyīya-mala,* and *kārma-mala.* Being most impure, the existential condition of such creatures too must be unbearable. They are born in such existential conditions that one would never wish to be born.[81] And the existents of this type constitute the universe of which we are a part. The experient of this type is totally oriented towards objectivity (*prameya*), which means that he is so engrossed with the perception of objectivity that he is totally destitute of the awareness of the transcendent. Thus the Sakala experient has his abode in objectivity. Insofar as the pervasion of the Sakala state is concerned, it extends from the element earth (*pṛthivī-tattva*) up to the *puruṣa-tattva,* which would be equivalent to the Sāṅkhya self-monad.

The second type of experient, called Pralayākala, is little higher

than the first one. The beings of this type, at the time of cosmic dissolution, revert to the state of dormancy. The beings of this kind do not operate under the divisionary power (*kalā-tattva*) of *māyā*, and consequently do not get involved in such obscuring powers of *māyā* as, for example, *kañcukas*. Existing apart from the evolutes of *māyā*, they are, therefore, also spoken of as Akala, that is, disembodied existents. This state of existence is not the result of good deeds or purity. It comes to be on account of their reversion, at the time of cosmic dissolution, to the state of dormancy, which results in their disembodiment. Being without a body, the creatures of this type are accordingly spoken of as "the beings of dissolution." It is due to their disembodied existence that these creatures gain freedom from the operations of *māyā* during the period of dissolution.[82] At the end of cosmic dissolution, that is, upon the emergence of manifest order, the creatures of this type regain their embodied form of existence, and consequently are subject, like any other embodied existent, to the cycle of transmigration.[83] From this it may be concluded that the state of a *pralayākala* is that of negation. It is so because of the fact that the entire world of objectivity, during the state of dissolution, is negated. However, the state of experience that eventuates in this state is that of complete unawareness. It is a state that may be equated to the one that occurs when one sinks into a comatose-like (*mūrcchā*) condition. It is in such a state of unawareness in which the Pralayākala experient abides. The extent of this state is limited to the *māyā-tattva*.

The third kind of creature on the hierarchical ladder of ascent is known as the Vijñānākala, that is, the cognitive creature. The experients of this type are free from the divisionary power of *māyā*. This freedom comes to these experients due to their capacity of having the knowledge of the Absolute. The knowledge of identity that they have of the Absolute is of partial nature. The cognitive experience of identity pertains only to the luminous, and not to the dynamic, aspect of the Absolute. This partial knowledge of the Absolute enables them to rise above the state of vacuity, which is the lot of Sakala beings. As a result of this partial knowledge of the Absolute the Vijñānākala beings arrive at the threshold of pure I-consciousness, which means that little striving is needed for having the perfect cognitive experience of identity. This little striving would

result in enabling these experients to attain a higher state of existence whereby perfect cognition of identity may be realized. Thus the Vijñānākala experient may be said to be the one who is on the path of spirituality. On account of this spiritual striving the experient of this state has the awareness of the Absolute, but this awareness is of partial nature,[84] in that the experient is not aware of the dynamic aspect of awareness. Such a state occurs to this experient on account of being subject to *āṇava-mala*, while having freed himself from the other two impurities, namely, *māyīya-mala* and *kārma-mala*. The state of Vijñānākala is said to exist in what is called the *mahāmāyā-tattva*, which lies between *māyā-tattva* and *śuddhavidyā-tattva*. The *mahāmāyā-tattva* is considered figuratively a *tattva* and not in actuality. The function of this *tattva* is to cause the regressive process of dissolution.

The experient who is qualitatively higher than the Vijñānākala is known as Mantra as well as Vidyeśvara, that is, "the master of knowledge." This state of the experient is also known as that of *śuddhavidyā*. The experients of this type have the power and capacity of having perfect cognition of identity with the Absolute as pure consciousness (*saṃvid*). Not only do they experience the Absolute as pure consciousness, but also come to realize their divine powers. These experients, however, still experience the phenomenal order in terms of difference, that is, in terms of "this" rather than "I."[85] The experient of this state, on account of the removal of all the three impurities, is so engrossed with the Self as to have the perfect knowledge of himself as being nothing but consciousness, which is of the nature of bliss, will, knowledge and action. Thus this state, though not stable, is the embodiment of the state of Śiva. And the mantra of this state is *ahaṃ, ahaṃ, idaṃ, idaṃ*, which discloses that the experience of the experient, though characterized by the realization of I-ness, is not completely free from this-ness. Since the experient of this state still has the experience of this-ness, it means that the experience is unstable and in terms of which is experienced both the I-ness and this-ness.

The experients that are pure and completely free from the three types of impurity, are of two types, and are known as Mantreśvaras and Mantramaheśvaras. Their spiritual maturity is so mature as to terminate in the cognitive experience of the Absolute in terms of

unity-in-diversity (*bhedābheda*).[86] The experience of unity-in-diversity denotes that the spiritual journey has not yet been completely perfected. In terms of subjective experience it means that these beings have only partially experienced the Fourth State (*turya*). Although no active impurity of any kind is to be found in these beings, yet the inactive seeds of the basic impurity (*āṇava-mala*) still linger in them. These beings have still to work out their salvation in terms of attaining a state of existence that is totally spiritual. It is the spiritual being alone who, upon merging in the Absolute, shines forth as an autonomous subject. For such a spiritual being the experience of objective existence as "this-ness" merges in the "I-ness" of subjectivity. The Mantreśvara experient (*pramātṛn*) is also known as Īśvara-pramātri, which denotes that such an experient is really "the sovereign master of mantra," which is *aham* or "I." It is a state that is characterized by consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and action. Accordingly this state is termed as that of *īśvara*. Insofar as the experience of the experient of this state is concerned, it does not differ from the state of Mantra. However, it differs from that of Mantra insofar as the stability and steadiness of the state is concerned. The mantra that the experient of this state experiences is in terms of *idaṃ-ahaṃ*. The experience in terms of this mantra discloses to the experient that the objective universe, which is denoted or indicated by *idam*, is not at all false, but is simply the expansion of his own Self. Insofar as Mantramaheśvara experient is concerned, he represents the state of *sadāśiva*. In the state of *sadāśiva* the experient has the experience of perfect identity with the Absolute. It is a state that is firm, steady and solid. Upon entering this state, there is no possibility of regression. The mantra of this state is that of *ahaṃ-ahaṃ*, which entails the awareness that the so-called objective universe is nothing but the expansion (*sphāra*) of the Self.

Finally, we have the state of Śiva. The experient of this state is none else than Śiva himself. In the above states there is difference between the experient and the state, which means that the experient and the state differ from each other. However, in the case of Śiva there does not occur such difference: both the experient and the state are identical. It means that nothing exists apart from or outside of Śiva. The mantra of this state is *ahaṃ*, viz., the universal "I."

Since it is "I" that prevails, it means that the so-called "this," viz., objectivity, completely disappears.

In the first six states both the state and the one who abides in the state, viz., the experient and the state exist and shine simultaneously together. However, when it comes to the state of Śiva, there does not exist such a thing precisely because both the state and the experient of the state are identical. All the seven states contain together all the thirty-six elements that are constitutive of what is known as the pure and impure orders of manifestation.

These seven states of the so-called seven experients have their corresponding energies (*śakti*-s). The first type of energy, known as the *sakala-pramātṛ-śakti*, is such energy as would let the Sakala experient be dominated by the three impurities of *āṇava-mala*, *māyīya-mala* and *kārma-mala*. The second type of energy, known as the *pralayākala-pramātṛ-śakti*, is such a power that terminates in the establishment of the Pralayākala experient in the state of void (*śūnya*), which is characterized by complete unawareness. The third energy, called the *vijñānākala-pramātṛ-śakti*, is such a power that leads to the termination of two impurities, namely, of *māyīya-mala* and *kārma-mala*. On account of the removal of these two impurities there remains only the *āṇava-mala*, and this impurity is dominant among the experients called Vijñānākala. Then we have the energy that represents the state of Mantra. On account of this energy, the experient has the experience of the mantra in the form of *ahaṃ, ahaṃ, idaṃ, idaṃ*. The fifth kind of energy, known as the *mantreśvara-pramātṛ-śakti*, represents the experient called Mantreśvara. This kind of energy is found in the state of *īśvara*. Then we have the state of *sadāśiva*, which represents the experient called Mantramaheśvara, and whose energy is known as the *mantra-maheśvara-pramātṛ-śakti*. Finally, we have the state of Śiva, and the energy, known as *śiva-pramātṛ-śakti*, finds itself already established in the I-ness, which is the Absolute.

The Classification of the Principle of Animation

The principle of animation concerning the various beings corresponds to their mode of existence or spiritual status. The basic principle of animation is called *prāṇa*. It is on account of the vital breath that the biological functions of embodied existents

become possible. Once animated by *prāṇa*, the living creatures thereby are differentiated from such entities that are insentient or lifeless. All types of existents, from Sakala to Akala, function in and through the power of *prāṇa*. *Prāṇa* as the power of animation operates differently at several levels of animation. The operation of *prāṇa*, for example, is quite different at the level of waking than what it is when one is in deep sleep. Similarly, it functions differently among different beings, depending upon the nature of their mode of existence. The operation of *prāṇa* among the Pralayākala beings is quite different from beings that, for example, are of Vijñānākala type. The classification of *prāṇa*, which goes back to the Vedic texts, is of five kinds, namely, *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, and *vyāna*. *Prāṇa* and *apāna* are said to be the two aspects of the life-force that is essential for the sustenance of life of those beings that have an embodied mode of existence (*sakala*).[87] When *prāṇa* and *apāna* merge, through the yogic practice of *prāṇāyāma*, into each other, and thereby eliminate their respective particularity, then there emerges a state of awareness that is characterized by cosmic unity. Life-force, thus, has one more function apart from keeping the embodied existents alive—and this is to allow the emergence of awareness of unity. This merger of *prāṇa* and *apāna* into each other also denotes the dissolution of one into the other. On account of this merger awareness shines forth in terms of I-consciousness. This state of dissolution, or of non-particularity, usually occurs in the state of deep sleep. The state of unity that is given rise upon the merger of *prāṇa* and *apāna* into each other results in the emergence of the state of *samāna* or "the equalizing state." The state of *samāna* is actualized in the state of *suṣupti*, which corresponds to the dreamless state.[88] As the state of *suṣupti* represents total rest, so it is responsible in energizing the function of animation.[89] The beings among which this principle of animation, namely, of *samāna*, is operational are known as Pralayākalas.[90] As the *samāna* breath emerges upon the dissolution of *prāṇa* and *apāna*, so the Pralayākala beings, while existing as disembodied existents during the period of cosmic dissolution, actualize the state of dissolution. This state of dissolution is really experienced when one is in deep sleep. There, thus, is a close correspondence between *samāna*, deep sleep and the beings of Pralayākala. The

fourth state of animation is known as that of *udāna*. It is a state in which the process of thought-process comes to a point of complete cessation. As a consequence of this cessation, the sense of egoity disappears, which means that I-ness of supreme consciousness shines forth in its full glory. In this state of cessation mind stops its activity of reflection and of conceptualization, and so accordingly it has been equated to the yogic state called Fourth (*turya*). The *udāna* principle of animation operates usually among the Vijñānākala beings. The spiritual glow of the *udāna* state also gets intensified among the beings known as the Mantra, Mantreśvara, and Mantramaheśvara. The yogin who has attained to this state experiences the rising up of a burning sensation in the spinal cord (*suṣumṇā*) towards the top of the head.[91] This burning sensation is the intimation concerning the arousal of Kuṇḍalinī which, as the energy (*śakti*) of Śiva, represents the Goddess. The complete arousal of the Kuṇḍalinī is accomplished when the state of *vyāna* is reached. The *vyāna* state of animation results in the experience of complete unity or what may be called penetration (*samāveśa*). This perfect undifferentiated state exists only in the Absolute, that is, Paramaśiva. Accordingly, it is known as that state that transcends the Fourth (*turyātīta*).[92]

The Concept of Divine Grace

The final cosmic activity of God is said to be that of revelation, and it is in terms of revelation that he reveals himself as to who he is. That is why the self-disclosure of God has been equated to his grace (*śaktipāta*). It is on account of divine grace that there arises the initial movement or desire for liberation in the individual being. Upon the emergence of this stir for liberation, the individual directs his effort at knowing as to how God's disclosure may be actualized. The Trika Śaivism is of the view that it is God's grace that should be seen as the main cause of an individual's search for liberation. Man by himself has very little possibility even to entertain such a thought, let alone seek liberation. Grace as the cause for liberation denotes that an individual is totally dependent upon God to the extent he remains in the state of bondage.[93]

The descent of God's grace upon individuals is without any distinction or partiality. The effect of grace is felt to what extent

impurities become inoperational. As the impact of impurities upon each individual is different both in dimension and intensity, so the working of grace will also differ from individual to individual. There are individuals who function in the dense surroundings of impurities and there are individuals who have thinned, through religious practices, the impact of impurities. The thinning of impurities is also dependent to what measure they have reached the state of maturity. It is in a graduated way that the ripening of impurities (*malapāka*) occurs. The working of grace will bear its fruit much faster in those in whom impurities have reached the state of maturity. The ones in whom impurities are still unripe may not experience the working of grace in the same measure as in those who are on the threshold of abrogating their impact.

The Trika Śaivism is of the view that grace should not be treated as being the result of one's religious deeds. Grace is purely a free gift of God.[94] Insofar as the result of meritorious deeds is concerned, it has been classified into three types. The good deeds may (1) determine the future birth of an individual in some specific abode (*loka*) or species; (2) the span of life (*āyu*) that the individual may live; and (3) the kind of pleasures he may experience. Neither grace nor liberation is seen to be the result of one's meritorious deeds in this classification. The meritorious deeds, instead of abolishing the wheel of becoming, only enhance it. The distinctiveness that differentiates good deeds from the evil ones lies in the fact that the former may provide better conditions for one's rebirth, whereas the latter may not. Action, whether good or bad, terminates in a definite fruit, and the quality of the fruit is dependent upon the quality of action. All said and done, one's present or future rebirth will solely be determined by the quality of actions one has performed or is performing.

As to why God should bestow grace as a free gift upon individuals without their asking is a query that needs a response. It is the very nature of God, maintain the Trika thinkers, to bestow grace upon people. It is the playful free will of God that is the real cause of grace. The descent of grace upon an individual occurs in accordance with the free will of God, which, according to the Trika, is the essential nature of God. While pouring down his grace upon people, God necessarily does not take into consideration whether

they have sinned or not. Grace basically is meant for the sinner, which means that God does not make any distinction between the sinner and the righteous when it comes to the question of grace. This aspect of grace is well described by Utpala when he writes: "Sir, you should have taken into consideration the merits and demerits of a person when bestowing your grace upon him; but you never do so." In the second-half of the verse he remarks: "But, having played this game with me, why are you now delaying the dawning of realization within me?"[95]

The Trika Śaivism, while accepting the role of divine grace for hastening the process of liberation, does not at the same time discount self-effort as a means of reaching the soteric goal. Self-effort is seen as one of the important ingredients for the development of inner spirituality. The very attempt at self-effort, however, is seen as the result of divine grace. If self-effort is isolated from divine grace, then there is all the possibility of transforming it into an egoistic enterprise. It would mean that an individual does not need the help of God to pursue his spiritual path. Such an interpretation of self-effort is not acceptable to the Trika thinkers. The bonded individual, however strong of will he may be, is always in need of divine grace. This dependence on grace discloses the fact that man is a contingent being insofar as he leads an embodied mode of existence. The Trika Śaivism, thus, maintains that they alone persevere in the path of self-effort who remain conscious of divine presence, or, in other words, on whom God pours down his grace in abundance. The divine grace of God may be seen as the initial point of movement towards salvation. It is on account of grace that there emerges within the individual love for God. Love as well as grace of God, thus, go together in helping the individual on the path of liberative self-realization.[96]

The Trika Śaivism has accepted devotional love of God, and thereby divine grace, as a legitimate spiritual means of reaching the specific soteric goal of liberation. It is divine grace of God which, on the one hand, is seen as the fundamental cause for the emergence of love for God within the individual's heart and, on the other, it is really one's love for God that terminates in the descent of grace.[97] Once grace begins its work in the recipient, it directs the recipient to a preceptor that is appropriate. The

preceptor, too, showers his grace in terms of expounding the theoretical knowledge of the Trika system. The thrust of the theoretical knowledge is to enable the disciple to grasp intellectually as to what the ultimate reality is, what is its nature, and what kind of relation, if any, exists between it and the world. In addition to theoretical knowledge, the preceptor also imparts knowledge concerning the practice of Śaiva-yoga. It is through the practice of Śaiva-yoga that the disciple is empowered to know who he essentially is. The preceptor also, through his spiritual powers, burns up impurities within the disciple. This is the spiritual trajectory that the disciples mostly have to travel. There are, however, some individuals who do not have to go through the above process. These exceptional individuals are so fortunate that God sends such grace upon them that is speedy and intense. As a consequence of this intense grace the seeker does not have to approach a preceptor. Whatever knowledge such a seeker needs for his salvation arises spontaneously within him. This spontaneous arising of divine knowledge is technically called *pratibhā*.[98] *Pratibhā* is that spiritual glow that always shines as a lustre of consciousness. This spiritual glow of consciousness is present in all living creatures.[99]

The divine grace of God is said to be of two kinds: liberation-oriented grace and pleasure-oriented grace. The former type of grace creates within the individual such an earnest desire for liberation that he seeks nothing else but liberation, whereas the latter type of grace terminates in the enjoyable experiences of divine powers (*siddhis*) and not in liberation. Thus the former kind of grace is spoken of as being transcendent (*parā*) and the latter one worldly (*aparā*).[100] The grace that leads to transcendence is either intense (*tīvra*), medium (*madhya*) or slow (*manda*). The same is the case with the non-transcending grace. The grace that is intense gives immediate result, whereas the medium form of grace will take sometime. The grace of slow nature may take a longer period of time in enabling the recipient to reach his goal. This understanding of grace tells us that whether one seeks liberation or worldly goals, one is dependent upon grace. This dependence on grace points out the fact that man as a creature of temporality is contingent, and so solely depends upon God. It also affirms interdependent nature of human relationships.

The divine grace of God becomes operational the moment an individual becomes a seeker of truth and in terms of which is given birth to the inclination of finding such ways and means whereby the ultimate goal of self-realization is reached. In order to facilitate the working of grace, the Trika has devised methods or ways of spirituality in such a manner as would suit each individual's temperament as well as mental requirements. The highest method that it has devised is that which pertains to Śiva (*śāmbhavopāya*). It is such a method as would lead to the attainment of the state of non-thought. In this method are used both philosophical as well as mental means. The philosophical method that is used is that of the theory of reflection (*pratibiṃbavāda*). This method of reflection is so used as would lead to the understanding that considers all forms of objectivity as being nothing more than reflection of the supreme I-consciousness. Also is made use of such mystical method of Sanskrit alphabet as that of *mātṛkā-cakra* or *pratyāhāra.* The main goal of all such means is to reach such a state where the emergence of thoughts disappears from the realm of the mind. Upon realizing the state of non-thought, the aspirant enters the transcendent state of consciousness whereby is realized that the emission of the entire universe as having proceeded from sentences, sentences from words, words from letters, and letters from the supreme Ego, which is none else but Paramaśiva. Accordingly, finds the aspirant that the so-called objective universe is reflected in his own consciousness—and this reflection has eventuated from within rather than from without. This is what *Mālinīvijaya-tantra* (2.23) has to say in this regard: *akiñciccin-takasyaiva guruṇā pratibodhataḥ/ jāyate yaḥ samāveśaḥ śāmbhavo' sāvudāhṛtaḥ//*

This method is also known as that of will (*icchā*) on account of it having originated from the power of will. Also it is so-called because it exists or operates at the level of will. Practically speaking, there are no such means in this method that have to be cultivated except to remain established in one's will. The only exertion that is involved is that of getting oneself established in will. Once established in one's will, rest follows by itself without doing anything, and accordingly is realized the state of non-thought in terms of the disappearance of the individual's individuality. What remains is

but consciousness—and that is the ultimate state of Being.

Next to *śāmbhavopāya* is the method that pertains to energy (*śāktopāya*). It is also known as the method of knowledge on account of it having proceeded from the power of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*). Although no physical exertion is involved in this method, yet the aspirant has to exert himself mentally if he desires to reach his goal. It is a method that basically consists of contemplative concentration. And concentration has to be such as would be directed to the void or gap that exists between two thoughts or two actions. It is this void between two objects that is considered as a point of junction. This concentration is such as if permeated by the presence of intense awareness. By maintaining uninterrupted awareness, the aspirant accordingly discovers as to what kind of reality exists in the void between two thoughts or actions. In this way an aspirant reaches his goal of self-awareness.

Finally, we have the inferior method that pertains to the limited individual (*āṇavopāya*). It is a method that is dependent on such elements as, for example, breathing (*uccāra*), sense organs (*karaṇa*), mental concentration (*dhyāna*), etc. Within the Trika the *uccāra* form of concentration is directed towards one's breathing. It forms an essential part of the practice that concerns what is called *cakrodaya*, or "the emergence of the wheel." In *cakrodaya* the aspirant is asked to concentrate deeply on the point that eventuates between the two breaths, namely, between inhalation and exhalation. Thus an aspirant is asked to focus his attention on the initial as well as the end points of the gap. And it is what constitutes the *uccāra* form of concentration. Insofar as the use of sense organs in meditation is concerned, it basically consists of maintaining the one-pointed concentration through any of the sense organs. However, the sense organ that is mainly used in this kind of concentration is that of sight. Thus when, for example, one looks at an object, he must concentrate on the object in such a way as to never blink. As a result of this focussed attention on the object, there comes a time when the object disappears, and what remains save the vast expanse of awareness. In this manner one enters into this infinite and all-pervasive awareness, which is the Self. Insofar as mental concentration (*dhyāna*) is concerned, it is basically of two types. It can be concentration with form and

concentration without form. When one concentrates on some mantra, we have formless *dhyāna*, but when one concentrates on some shape, then we have *dhyāna* with form. Finally, we have the *sthāna-prakalpanā*, which means focussing of attention on some particular place. The higher form of this concentration consists in finding out as to which kind of reality exists in the span that is involved in breathing, which, according to the Trika, means of discovering as to where the deities, the guardian angels, etc. are residing. It also means to find out as to where exists the location of morning, midday, evening, of sunrise and sunset. It is on these specific points on which one is asked to concentrate so that the course of breath is discovered. And the ultimate result is the discovery of the vastness of the universe in one breath. The lower form of *sthāna-prakalpanā* consists in concentrating on the different points of the body. The usual places of concentration in the body are the point between the two eyebrows (*bhrūmadhya*), the pit of the throat (*kaṇṭha-kūpa*) and the heart (*hṛdaya*).

Finally, we have *anopāya*, which is no-method. It transcends all the so-called spiritual methods. In *śāmbhavopāya* the aim is to realize the state of non-thought, whereas in *śāktopāya* it is one-pointed concentration that is the goal. Insofar as *āṇavopāya* is concerned, the goal is to gain proficiency in concentration through the support of mantra and breathing. In *anopāya* the aspirant has to do nothing. He simply has to maintain awareness with regard to the fact that nothing has to be done, nothing has to be achieved. One has to be as one is, which means to abide in oneself.

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2

The Doctrinal Scaffolding of Trika

WHATEVER FORMS OF DOCTRINE, whether philosophical or theological, Trika may have enunciated, they are not different from other systems of Indian thought insofar as search for ultimate meaning of life is concerned. It is basically the way we look at life-in-the-world that has determined not only the metaphysical notion of ultimate reality/truth, but also thereby has determined as to what should be the ultimate goal and in terms of which meaning of life could be realised. The ultimate goal of life in terms of its meaning is so conceived as would terminate in the final solution of problems that embodied existent embodies. The question, then, arises as to what constitutes the basic existential problem of life-in-the-world. It is agreed upon by most of the religious systems of thought that the fundamental problem that is constitutive of embodied existence is bondage—and for the Trika bondage, as with other systems of thought, does not so much entail suffering as much as the loss of freedom. Such a conception of bondage has its roots in the conception of ultimate reality as being nothing but Freedom (*svatantratā*). It is, thus, within the framework of such an understanding of reality that the Trika soteriological goal as the realisation of freedom from bondage can properly be appreciated.

It would mean that the Trika system of thought is in no manner different from other schools of Indian philosophy or religious systems insofar as search for meaning of life-in-the-world as well as its ultimate goal are concerned. It is as much concerned with such existential problems as suffering, non-freedom and con-

ditioned nature of embodied existence as would be any genuine religious or philosophical system of thought. In its search for such ways and means, both theoretical and practical, that would terminate in the discovery (*āviṣkaraṇa*) of ultimate meaning of life, the Trika has discovered such a philosophical tool, in the form of *pratyabhijñā*, or "recognition,"[1] whereby the possibility as to who we actually are can become an actuality.

The Trika Non-Dualism

Upon discovering *pratyabhijñā* as an appropriate philosophical tool of self-discovery, the Trika itself, with the passage of time, came to be known as the School of Recognition (*pratyabhijñā-vāda*).[2] The fundamental metaphysical premise of the Pratya-bhijñā, and thereby of the Trika, is such a conception of reality as would be non-dualistic in orientation but theistic in pragmatic terms. It is non-dualistic in the sense of looking at the Absolute as being the sole reality. It is such a conception of the Absolute as would authenticate the non-dualism (*advaitavāda*) of Śaṅkara. However, the Trika differs from the non-dualism of Śaṅkara when it bestows such properties upon the Absolute as would result in the emergence of an absolutism that is sufficiently theistic. It is at this point of reflection that the Trika, while expressing its synthetic approach to reality, completely diverges from the course that Śaṅkara has taken with regard to the affirmation of reality as being non-dual.

As to why the Trika has taken a different route than that of Śaṅkara is because it does not want to have its Absolute so impersonal, inactive and indeterminate as to lead to a kind of nihilism that Nāgārjuna has propounded. In order to safeguard itself against the dangers of nihilism, the Trika has conceived the Absolute in terms of both "light" (*prakāśa*) and "cognitive awareness" (*vimarśa*). What it amounts to saying is that the Absolute as consciousness does not simply shine (*prakāśayate*), but is also aware of itself as being luminous. The Absolute as light illumines, like the light of the sun or of a lamp, everything that there is, which means that the very manifestation of anything is possible because of the Absolute being luminous. It is to this aspect of the Absolute as consciousness (*cit, saṃvid*) to which the

Kaṭha Upaniṣad[3] has referred to when the following is expressed: "Upon the shining of That (viz., of Paramaśiva), everything (whatever there is) shines. Because of its light (viz., of the Absolute) everything is made to appear."

While being luminous, the Absolute thereby establishes itself as being so transcendent as to be beyond the reach of mind and intellect, which would, from an epistemic point of view, denote its ineffable character. As being both ineffable and transcendent, the Absolute thereby would be both inconceivable and inexpressible. As such it is impossible to formulate such positive formulations that would terminate in the emergence of knowledge of the Absolute that is determinate and conceptually expressible. It boils down to saying that the Absolute can be approached only through such negations as have been enunciated by the Upaniṣads, viz., *neti, neti*. Whatever intellectual formulations in terms of dogmatics may have been formulated, they are only approximations, and so must be treated merely as approximations.[4] Since there is no possibility of knowing the Absolute as it is in itself through conceptual formulations, so the only way of knowing as to what the Absolute is in itself, according to the Trika, is in terms of self-realisation.[5]

Insofar as the Absolute is viewed as being transcendent, ineffable, luminous consciousness, there is no divergence of opinion between the Trika and the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. While agreeing with Śaṅkara about the Absolute as being an all-inclusive ground (*ādhāra*) of existence, Trika at this point of reflection goes further in its metaphysical formulation by asserting that the Absolute is also self-cognitive awareness (*vimarśamaya*). The insertion of this new dimension in the metaphysical thinking of the Trika is necessitated by the fact of avoiding the danger, on the one hand, of slipping into nihilism and, on the other hand, of not reducing the Absolute to the level of inertness (*jaḍatva*). We know, for example, that a diamond shines, but the diamond is unaware of its luminosity on account of it being inert. It is not, however, the case with Paramaśiva. Paramaśiva is aware of itself as being of the nature of luminosity. In the language of Trika, it denotes the immediate, non-relational awareness of itself as being Ego.[6] It is this awareness of itself as Ego that is encapsulated by

the term *vimarśa*. As to why the Trika thinks of the Absolute as being also *vimarśa* is to safeguard the Absolute from being a mere inert object.[7]

Thus the Trika conception of the Absolute is such as would be possible to formulate such a definition in which action (*kriyā*) is given its due place. In viewing the Absolute both as luminous knowledge and cognitive self-awareness, the Trika thereby can with ease maintain the nature of reality as being both transcendent (*viśvottīrṇa*) and immanent (*viśvamaya*).[8] As consciousness (*cit*) Absolute is transcendent, but as of the nature of action (*kriyātmaka*) it is immanent. In theological terms this conception of the Absolute is seen or viewed in terms of the perfect unity of Śiva and Śakti, of transcendence and immanence, of knowledge and action, of consciousness and bliss. As Absolute, Śiva is one without a second, and so is transcendent to all that that falls within the continuum of space-time. Accordingly is, thus, Śiva referred to as being supreme (*parama*) and absolutely transcendent (*anuttara*). In contrast to its transcendence, the Absolute as I-consciousness is seen to be the creative source of whatever there is in the phenomena, nay of phenomena itself, which would mean that Śiva is the foundation (*ādhāra*) of all forms of existence, of proof and disproof, and of knowledge. It is this aspect of the Absolute that is equated with immanence.[9]

At the theological level of thought the Absolute as transcendent is concretised by Śiva, whereas it is Śakti that is seen to be representing the aspect of immanence. In terms of philosophical language it would mean that the Absolute is identical with both Being and Becoming. The Absolute is Being when abiding in itself, but expresses itself as Becoming when engaged in the creative activity of emission (*visarga*). It is on account of the luminosity of Being that the Becoming as a manifest category is actualised.[10] In phenomenological language it would mean that Being as self-shining consciousness expresses itself as the manifestable category in terms of Becoming.

The Trika premise concerning the Absolute as being self-shining consciousness is proved by the fact that each individual being is conscious of himself. If the Absolute were destitute of consciousness, then It would be reduced to the state of inertness,

which would mean that everything would be identical with the chaos of darkness because nothing would be manifest. The very fact that every phenomenal category is manifest, and thereby knowable, proves that consciousness is of the nature of light. From this it is not difficult to conclude that whatever there is, is because of the light of consciousness.[11] Since everything is manifest, and thereby knowable, on account of the light of consciousness, so it would be appropriate to assert that existence *per se* shines because of consciousness.[12] It is because of the shining nature of the Absolute as consciousness that the Trika non-dualism is referred to, and rightly so, as being experiential (*pratyakṣādvaita-vāda*).[13]

The Absolute, as already pointed out, is not simply identical with the self-shining consciousness, but also vibrates (*spanda*) with its own power or energy (*śakti*), which is equated with the activity of cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*). At the theological level of thought this self-cognitive awareness is so personified as to be given the nomenclature of the Goddess. It is the concept of the Goddess that encapsulates within itself the energy of the Absolute as Śiva. Thus the Absolute is seen as the unity of Śiva (viz., of consciousness) and Śakti (viz., the Goddess). When Śiva, thus, is said to be non-different from its own Śakti, it means that Śakti embodies Śiva's power of self-awareness (*vimarśa*), which, when translated into actuality, denotes the power of will (*icchā-śakti*). This understanding of the Absolute as being endowed with activity differentiates the Trika non-dualism from the one that is adumbrated by Śaṅkara. While the Absolute (viz., *brahman*) of Śaṅkara is simply inactive consciousness, the Trika has such an Absolute as would be both self-shining consciousness as well as self-reflecting awareness, and so accordingly is reflected the dynamic nature of the Absolute.[14] It is through self-awareness that the Absolute reflects itself to be of the nature of shining consciousness. Even Śaṅkara seems to be subscribing to this view of the Absolute as being dynamic when he says: *Śivaḥ śaktyayukto yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavitum/ na chedevam devo na khalu spanditum api//*

The power of self-awareness (*vimarśa-śakti, icchā-śakti*), according to the Trika, is innate to Śiva, and so accordingly

expresses the absolute freedom (*svātantrya*)[15] as well as the infinite bliss (*ānanda*) through five cosmic activities of emission, preservation and dissolution of the universe. In addition to these three cosmic activities, there are two more activities of the Absolute, which are those of concealment and of revelation.[16] It is in terms of self-awareness that the Absolute is spoken of as self-consciousness (*pūrṇāhantā*), and so accordingly is identified with absolute Egoity or I-ness (*ahaṃ-vimarśa*). It is as Ego that the Absolute is aware of itself as "I am," which simultaneously denotes Śiva's awareness of being identical with freedom (*svātantrya*) and bliss (*ānanda*). Being identical with freedom, and thereby with bliss, the Absolute thereby constantly brims over with glory (*aiśvarya*). As Śiva is identical with its own Śakti, so the self-shining nature of consciousness is said to be non-distinct from the self-awareness of consciousness, which explains the vibratory character of consciousness. Likewise the self-luminosity of consciousness as self-awareness as well as absolute freedom and bliss, which, though seen to be pertaining to Śakti, are identical because bliss is nothing but the awareness of the spontaneous inner activity of consciousness, which apart from self-awareness is impossible to experience.

This conception of the Absolute as being both self-shining and cognitively self-aware is contrary to the view that Advaita Vedānta has propounded. For the Advaita Vedānta the Absolute is simply pure consciousness, and so is devoid of activity. For it considers the subject-object duality as well as any kind of activity as being the result of *māyā*, which is so elusive power as to be identical with illusion. Being elusive, it is difficult to say whether it exists or does not exist. The Trika rejects this view of the Absolute on the ground that such an Absolute is so lifeless as to be dead. That which is devoid of activity cannot truly be said to be existing. The Absolute of Śaṅkara may be self-shining consciousness, but, being lifeless, it does not know itself to be shining. Moreover, Śaṅkara thinks that the objective world is totally false (*mithyā*) on account of it being the product of the elusive *māyā*. For the Trika such a view is unacceptable, because it considers the universe as being real emanation (*visarga*) of Paramaśiva, which means that whatever appears exists, prior to its manifestation, potentially

within the Absolute.[17] Thus whatever there exists within the Absolute as an integral "I" (*ahaṃ*). While existing as pure "I" with the Absolute, the objective universe, upon its manifestation, is referred to as "this" (*idaṃ*). Thus the objective universe is but the appearance of the Absolute, which is equated to the reflection that is reflected in a mirror.[18]

This Trika conception of the Absolute as being the union of identity of Śiva and Śakti, of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, of *cit* and *kriyā* would mean that the type of non-dualism that is being enunciated is basically a synthesis of opposites, or what may be called the *coincidentia oppositorum*. Such a view of the Absolute would be reflecting the Hegelian dialectic of thesis and antithesis, which ultimately terminates in the unity of synthesis. It is in terms of synthesis of the opposites that the perfect unity of Being (*tādātmyatā*) is realised. There is, however, the problem of explaining logically as to how the opposites can co-exist or become one in terms of identity. It is like saying that heat and cold, shade and light cannot only co-exist, but can also achieve identity in such a manner as to lead to the negation of their individual identities. The response of the Trika to this problem is in terms of the assertion that maintains that the so-called opposites that appear in thought are in fact non-different in terms of their essence. It would, thus, appear that we speak of the union of opposites for the sake of linguistic convenience. In fact, there is only one reality, and that reality is but Paramaśiva.

The Emission of the Universe

The Absolute of the Trika, namely, Paramaśiva, is not only self-shining (*sva-prakāśa*) consciousness, but is also self-reflecting awareness (*vimarśamaya*) and in terms of which it is aware of itself as "I am." It is through its self-awareness that the autonomy (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute as self-will (*sva-icchā*) is concretised when the objective universe is given rise. Were the Absolute devoid of cognitive self-awareness, and of freedom in terms of self-will, then it would no more be the ultimate reality, but would be like an object that is inert. Accordingly writes Abhinavagupta: "If the Supreme Reality were (devoid of the power) of manifesting itself multitudinously, but remained (as it were) encased within

its uniform solidity, it would (no more) be supreme power or consciousness, but would be something like a jar."[19] While viewing the Absolute as being both consciousness and will, Trika thereby is in a position to say that Paramaśiva is both the knowing subject (*jñātā*) and the doer (*kartā*) of deeds. This knowing and doing of the Lord is so autonomous as to equate it with freedom itself.

For the Trika the Lord's activity basically stems from his being so blissful creatively as to let it overflow in terms of the emission of the universe. This creatively blissful nature of the Lord is referred to as *vimarśa* or *śakti*. It is this aspect of the Lord that contains all that there is or will be. In the *Parātriśikā*[20] we are informed that whatever is manifest exists, prior to its manifestation, potentially in the Lord. As to how the manifest categories exist potentially in the Lord is explained in terms of the illustration of a banyan tree exiting potentially in the seed: "As the extensive *banyan* tree exists in the form of potency in the seed, so also does this universe, in its entirety, exist potentially in the heart of the Supreme." This analogy of the seed and the tree is also illustrated with another example of peacock who, prior to its birth, lies potentially with its variegated and colourful plumage in the plasma of the egg. Both these analogies seem to have its roots in the *satkārya* causal doctrine of the Sāṅkhya, which maintains that the effect, prior to its becoming an effect, exists potentially in the cause. This causal doctrine of the Sāṅkhya is not free from certain logical flaws. One of the flaws is that the seed, while giving rise to a plant, is totally destroyed. With reference to Paramaśiva it would mean that he would end up in self-destruction in the process of giving rise to the universe. Also if it is maintained that the effect is nothing but the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of the cause, as would the analogy of peacock imply, then the universe would be nothing but the transformation of Paramaśiva. In order to avoid these pitfalls of this theory, and thereby also of these analogies, the Trika accordingly has resorted to the doctrine of appearance (*ābhāsavāda*) to account as to how the process of manifestation of the universe is accomplished. At an appropriate place we shall discuss as to what the Trika theory of appearance is in the context of its assertion that the universe is but the reflection (*pratibimba*) of the Absolute.

Being absolutely free to do what he wants to do, the Great Lord (Maheśvara) accordingly manifests himself as this universe. The Absolute is spoken of as Maheśvara on account of him being sovereignly free, which means that the Great Lord has such a nature (*svabhāva*) as to have sovereign will (*svatantratā, svātantrya*), which is equated with absolute freedom. The ideation with regard to the emission of the universe that is in the mind of the Lord gets itself objectified on account of the sovereign free will. This Trika understanding of the Absolute would mean that Maheśvara is totally free to emit or not to emit the universe out of himself, which means that there is neither the inner nor the outer necessity that necessitates the emission of the universe. If this is the case, then the autonomy of the Lord would be beyond space, time and causality. Free will of the Lord, according to the Trika thinking, would denote such an absolute power of the Lord whereby he accomplishes all his tasks in accordance with his will, which is unrestrained, unconfined and unimpeded in its flow. This is how Abhinavagupta has explained, in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*, as to what is constitutive of divine freedom of the Lord:

> Therefore the Lord, Paramaśiva, whose own being is Consciousness of the nature of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, who is the undefinable, ever-present Reality appears as subject from Rudra down to immovable entities, as objects like blue, pleasure, etc., which appear as if separate, though in essence they are not separate, through the glorious might of *svātantrya*, which is inseparable . . . from *saṃvit* and which does not conceal in any way the real nature of the Supreme. This is the exposition of *svātantrya-vāda*.[21]

Although manifesting itself as this universe that is subject to change, yet the Absolute remains untouched by any kind of change on account of the fact that It transcends the changing phenomena. The Absolute is referred to as being pure and self-reflecting consciousness on account of the fact that, on the transcendental plane of its own background (*sva-bitti*), It manifests out of Its own free will this objective universe.[22] The objective universe, prior to its manifestation, exists within the Absolute as a potentiality, which means that the universe in its unmanifest

condition is completely identical with It. Thus it would mean that the Absolute alone is the background (*bhitti*), the ground (*ādhāra*) and the material (*upādāna*) for the manifest universe.

The view of the Absolute as being identical with what seemingly is outside of It establishes its all-inclusive character, which means that nothing fundamentally exists apart from, or outside of It. As pure Subject, the Absolute is endowed with the powers of will, knowledge and action—and it is through these powers that the process of manifestation is eventuated.[23] All such powers really express the blissful as well as the playful nature of the Absolute, which is identified with the absolute freedom. By terming the Absolute as being self-reflecting consciousness, the Trika thereby asserts that the Absolute is pure Ego. If the Absolute were destitute or devoid of self-reflection, viz., of Egoity, then we would reduce It to mere nothingness (*śūnyatā*). Thus these powers of the Absolute, according to the Trika, are not a chimera of imagination, nor are they to be considered as a kind of superimposition by *māyā*, as is the case with the *brahman* of Śaṅkara. As these powers are actual, so it is through these powers that the Absolute as Paramaśiva manifests Itself as this universe. From this premise it is, thus, concluded that everything is Śiva and Śiva is everything, and so Śiva is both the Subject as well as the Object.

The error concerning the nature of the Absolute emerges when the object, which in our case is the universe, is considered to be outside of or independent of the projecting consciousness. Since everything is subsumed in the unity of Being, so whatever kind of difference is experienced objectively is to be treated as being false. This is so because every kind of manifestation exists within the Supreme Self. The manifestation of the universe should not be treated as a kind of modification (*pariṇāma*) or as a modification without change (*avikṛta-pariṇāma*) or as a false appearance (*vivarta*) of the Absolute. The phenomena as manifestation (*ābhāsa*) are real in the sense of them existing identically with the Absolute. The term *ābhāsa* in the Trika does not have the same connotation as *vivarta*, false appearance, has in the Advaita Vedānta. In the Trika the appearance of the Absolute as the objective universe is real. Also the terms like

māyā and *avidyā* are not treated in the Trika in the manner they are understood in the system of Advaita Vedānta. The Trika considers *māyā* as being such a real power of the Absolute whereby the One appears as Many. Insofar as the term *avidyā* is concerned, it does not denote absence of knowledge, but signifies such knowledge that is erroneous or incomplete (*apūrṇa-khyāti*).[24] The complete absence of knowledge would mean of reducing everything to the state of inertness, which however is not the case.[25]

The Trika Theory of Appearance

The Trika theory of appearance (*ābhāsavāda*), in contrast to the Advaita theory of appearance (*vivarta*), is not only different in its orientation, but has altogether a different goal to serve. The aim of the Trika theory is to establish the fact that the manifest universe, prior to its manifestation, exists as an undifferentiated mass in the Absolute. The analogy that is made use of to explain this perfect unity between the Absolute and the objective universe prior to its manifestation is the existence of the peacock's colourful plumage in the plasma of an egg prior to its coming into being. And the analogy is given the nomenclature of the plasma of the peacock's egg (*mayūrāṇḍarasanyāya*). In the case of the Advaita Vedānta the objective world, prior to its manifestation, does not exist as an undifferentiated mass in *brahman*. The world, instead, is said to be the work of elusive, *māyā*, and on account of *māyā*/ *avidyā* it is being superimposed upon *brahman*. It boils down to the fact that the so-called world is as illusory as is the superimposed snake on a rope. It is at this point of understanding that the Trika radically differs from Advaita Vedānta when it comes to the question of the ontological status of the world.

Since the universe, prior to its manifestation, exists as an undifferentiated mass within the Absolute, it would mean that the universe has to be treated as an expression of *cit*/ *saṃvid*. This assertion of the Trika would mean that whatever appears, whether it is subject, object or knowledge, has to be treated as a manifestation (*ābhāsa*) of the cosmic consciousness, which is but the Absolute. Whatever appears or becomes manifest is an

appearance in a limited way, which means that every kind of appearance is subject to some kind of limitation.

As to how this process of manifestation is occasioned is explained in terms of the theory of reflection. This theory is made use of in order to avoid the pitfalls of the doctrine of transformation (*pariṇāma*) as well as of the Vedāntic theory of illusion. As to what the theory of reflection in a mirror is (*darpaṇa-pratibimba-bhāva*),[26] is explained by Abhinavagupta thus:

> As it (so happens that) in a transparent mirror appear (such) variegated images as (those) of a city, village, etc., as being different from each other as well as from the mirror, though being non-different from the mirror, even so the world, though non-distinct from the taintless consciousness of Paramaśiva, appears to be distinct both with regard to the variegated (world) of objects as well as (from the) Universal Consciousness.[27]

Thus the theory of appearance is so made use of as to establish that the apearances, though appearing distinct, are not distinct from Paramaśiva in the same manner as the reflection of a city or a village in a mirror is not different, though appearing to be different, from the mirror itself. However, there exists some kind of difference between the reflection in a mirror and of the universe as the reflection of supreme consciousness. In the case of the mirror, the image that is reflected is external to the mirror, whereas in the case of Paramaśiva it is not so, because whatever is reflected is but its own ideation. Also the reflection in a mirror is actualised due to the light that is external to the mirror. However, this is not the case with Maheśvara. Whatever, Maheśvara reflects, is reflected due to its own light. Maheśvara does not require, as does the mirror, any external light. Also there is another kind of difference that occurs between Maheśvara and the mirror. The mirror, being inert, is not at all aware of the reflections that are being reflected in it, whereas Paramaśiva, being identical with consciousness, is aware of its own ideation that are being reflected within it. The *ābhāsa*, thus, has to be treated as a kind of external projection of the Universal Consciousness. In the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*[28] this very idea is beautifully explained thus:

None (whatsoever) apart from the Lord, who is pure Consciousness, has (the power or capacity) to manifest externally the entire phenomenal world that exists (potentially) within Him. (He accomplishes this task) through the power of His will, just as a yogi does, without (resorting) to the use of any substantive material for this purpose.

Thus the Trika theory of appearance in terms of the analogy of reflection in a mirror is used to delineate the idea that the Absolute, through its own power of free will (*sva-icchā*) projects the universe on the background (*bhitti*) of its own consciousness. In resorting to the theory of appearance the Trika thereby explains as to how the universe in terms of the reflected image in a mirror exists within the mirror-like consciousness of the Absolute. In the process of manifestational appearance the universe appears as if it is different from the Absolute in the same manner as do the reflected images appear to be different from the mirror. It is on account of the powers of differentiation (*apohana-śakti*) and of obscuration (*māyā-śakti*) of the Absolute that the universe is experienced as being different from the Universal Consciousness, whereas in actuality it is not. When we speak of manifestation or appearance, it does not simply mean the appearance of the objective universe, but includes within its ambit the subject, object, knowledge, the senses, perception, conception, imagination, and so on. It means that the manifest object as well as the manifesting consciousness is identical. Insofar as the experience of difference at the empirical level is concerned, it is apparent on account of it being the outcome of the Lord's powers of differentiation and of obscuration, which, according to the Trika, means that the Lord is as much free to reveal Himself as much as he is free to conceal Himself.

Manifestation as a Process of Condensation

The Trika theory concerning the manifestation of the Absolute as the universe has at its background the idea that the Absolute, while being of the nature of vibration, tends to be overwhelmed by its own blissful glory in such a manner as to externalise itself. This conception of the Absolute as being the unity of Śiva and Śakti signifies that it is the innate power of Śakti that, as it were,

so pushes Śiva to transgress its own limits of transcendence as to immanentise itself by manifesting itself as the universe. In philosophical terms the Absolute is said to be pulsating continuously with the innate throb or vibration (*spanda*). It is this inner throb within the Absolute that is seen as the basis for the creative process that terminates in the manifestation of the universe. The flashing forth of the Absolute as the universe occurs, on the one hand, in the contraction (*saṃkoca*) or condensation of the Absolute and, on the other hand, in the coming into being (*unmeṣa*) or expansion (*vikāsa*) of the universe. Thus this dyadic movement denotes that what for the one is contraction is expansion for the other. What it amounts to saying is that the very manifestation of the universe entails simultaneously the contraction for the Absolute.

The flashing forth of the Absolute as the universe also parallels the manifestation of the Primordial Speech (*parā-vāk*) as the Gross Speech (*vaikharī-vāk*). The Primordial Speech, in its downward descent, so condenses itself as to become the gross speech. It is through the process of condensation or contraction that the Absolute as Supreme Speech manifests itself as the variegated universe of objects by reducing itself to the Gross Speech. This doctrine of the Absolute becoming the gross universe through the process of condensation has its parallel in the Platonic view of reality as light becoming grosser and grosser through its downward descent. It is in the context of this view that the Trika asserts that every sentient and non-sentient entity is nothing but the grossification of the supreme consciousness, which, when put in idealistic format, would mean that nothing exists apart from consciousness. Since everything, according to this view, is nothing but the gross form of Śiva, so the effort of each human being should be to re-discover their essential nature as being nothing else than Śivahood. In terms of the Pratyabhijñā philosophy it would mean the "re-cognition" of oneself as being identical with the light of consciousness, which at the same time is I-consciousness. The mystical illumination of identity as "flashing out" is explained thus:

> Since the Self has been spoken of as consciousness, so it cannot be said to be inert. And so this (consciousness accordingly) is identical with the

activity of awareness, (and) due to which we can differentiate it from an insentient object. The (very) essence of consciousness is to be self-aware. It is the Supreme Speech that emerges out of itself, and is (accordingly termed as) the self-sufficiency of God as well as his divine essence. This consciousness (as awareness) is proclaimed as being shimmering, pulsating, supreme (and) unconditioned reality. As the heart of the supreme Lord, it (accordingly) is the essence (of *brahman*).[29]

The very idea of the Absolute as being of the nature of vibration has opened up new vistas of understanding for the Pratyabhijñā philosophy concerning the cosmic manifestation of Maheśvara. Since the cosmic manifestation is the condensation of the Absolute as consciousness, so it is no more considered to be as illusory as is a snake on a rope. It means that the cosmic manifestation is not thought to be illusory in the sense of it being a "superimposition" (*adhyāsa*) upon the unchanging reality called *brahman*. Also the cosmic manifestation is not the work, as is the case with Sāṅkhya, of an independent evolving entity called *prakṛti*. For the Trika cosmic manifestation is but the actualisation of the latent possibilities within the "heart" (*hṛdaya*) of Maheśvara. These latent possibilities as seeds are actualised when there is a sudden flashing from Paramaśiva of countless perceptible objects that are constitutive of the universe.

The flashing forth of the supreme consciousness as the universe is, at the theological level of thinking, accomplished by the Goddess as Śakti, which, being of the nature of vibration, characterises the essential nature of Maheśvara. It is Śakti as the Mother-Goddess that, in the process of cosmic manifestation, is responsible in reducing the Absolute, through a series of intermediary stages, into what we perceive as the objective universe of entities. While giving rise to the manifest universe, the Mother-Goddess as Śakti so condenses Maheśvara as would facilitate the passage for it to assume the various forms of the sounds of Sanskrit alphabet. Thus the vowels as well as the consonants of Sanskrit alphabet are seen to be embodying the diversity of the inner possibilities that are innate to Maheśvara's own-being.[30] The conception of the phenomenal manifestation as being the graduated descent of the supreme consciousness parallels the other Trika concept of decreasing of the initial light,

which means that consciousness as light becomes grosser and grosser in its downward descent. In other words, it means the more light becomes grosser the more it becomes darker. Thus this concept of the cosmos as being the condensation or diminishing of the initial light is quite contrary to the standpoint of Advaita Vedānta, which adheres to the notion that the universe is but the product of *māyā/ avidyā,* and so is erroneously being superimposed upon an indeterminate and passive *brahman.* For Śaṅkara the manifest universe that we see and experience is false because of it being as illusory as is water in a desert. This view deprives the universe of having any kind of ontological status. Even if it is given some kind of status, it cannot be more than that that is accorded to objects that are illusory. The universe would be real to the measure the experience of illusion persists. Upon the negation of illusion will also be negated the universe that was, prior to negation, considered as being real. This view of Śaṅkara is not acceptable to the Trika. According to the Trika, there occurs a real manifestation of the universe when the initial outburst or the flashing forth of the vibrating energy of Maheśvara eventuates. It is an outburst in terms of which occurs the continuous emanation of all kinds of objects. It is such a conception of reality that, in the words of Mark Dyczkowski, is "single creative-cum-destructive dynamic."[31]

This Trika conception of the Absolute as being both creative and destructive parallels the Pauline concept of God as "emptying" himself of his divinity by incarnating himself as Jesus. The emptying of God is explained in terms of incarnation as being a kind of insertion of the Divine within the womb of Matter. This insertion of God within Matter denotes, on the one hand, humility of God and, on the other hand, self-effacement of the Divine. The notion of humility as well as of self-effacement describe the process as to how God annihilates himself by becoming Man-Jesus. By becoming Man-Jesus, God thereby uplifts the bound being (*paśu*) in terms of becoming a participant in the festival of the unity of Being. When translated into the language of Trika, it would mean that Paramaśiva by becoming, on the one hand, a bound being annihilates himself in the furnace of humility and, on the other hand, would denote that the bound being, through self-annihilation, actualises adherence to God. Thus this doctrine

of self-destruction delineates the idea that it is by self-emptying that the welling up of the Divine within us is actualised. This theology of *kenosis* informs us that God, by annihilating himself, becomes the bound being, as personified by Man-Jesus, and likewise the limited individual through self-effacement realises his unity with the Divine. Thus through this two-way movement of self-effacement, Man and God meet and encounter each other, and as a result of which is recognised the primal state of identity that brims over with the nectar of bliss of immortality. The one who has the experience of the Beatific Vision of identity is spoken of as being liberated-in-life (*jīvanmukta*). For the liberated-in-life everything pulsates and vibrates with the undifferentiated fulness of bliss. It is an experience in terms of which is proclaimed that Śiva is All (*omnia in omnibus*). Thus the liberated is one who, in the words of Abhinavagupta,

> has uninterruptedly practised (the art of) immersing (*samāveśa*) himself in Śiva and has perfectly recognised (such) energies (as of) knowledge and action as being (nothing but) the pure freedom of the Lord, can then know and do all he desires, though he is still associated with body. He not only is divinised, in the ordinary sense of the word, but he is fundamentally free (to make) use of (such) divine powers (as) belong to Paramaśiva and (consequently) lives in eternal freedom.[32]

As Paramaśiva may become contracted in the process of emitting the universe out of itself, so there is no denying the fact that through this self-effacement the individual being is so uplifted as to release him from the grip of the bondage of limitations, viz., from bondage itself. St. Gregory Palmas aphoristically expresses this double-edged movement of the Divine thus: God became Man in order to make man God. This experience of becoming God is nothing else but the realisation of one's essential nature as being freedom and fulness. It is an experience of transcendence, and Abhinavagupta, in his *Tantrasāra* (chap. 2), has explained as to what is constitutive of this transcendent experience thus:

> All this is therefore one Reality—a Reality undivided by time, unconfined by space, unenfeebled by accidents, unconstrained by configurations, unexpressed by words and unmanifested by norms of knowledge. It is the

cause, at its own will and pleasure, of the attainment of the essences of these things, from time to norms. It is the sovereignly free Reality, the concentration of beatitude. And I am absolutely It—there, within me, is reflected the universe.[33]

Bondage versus Freedom

It would appear that the Trika assertion concerning the Absolute as being non-dual is contradicted by the experience of duality that each one of us experiences while conducting the affairs of the world. The Trika, however, accepts this hard-nosed evidence that the worldly experience of each individual is characterised by the duality of subject-object. The very structure of the language of knowledge is dualistic. This experience of duality, however, occurs, so asserts the Trika, because of ignorance (*avidyā* or *pauruṣa-ajñāna*). It is this ignorance that is seen to be responsible in giving rise to every kind of limitation in terms of the differentiated knowledge.[34] Thus the sense of difference or of limitation is seen to be the outcome of ignorance or of impurity, which translates itself into the experience of the self as being both bound and finite (*apūrṇamānyatārūpam ajñānam*).[35] It is the erroneous acceptance of the self as being bound or limited that is what is constitutive of bondage. Insofar as ignorance in itself is concerned, it is said to be of two types: innate (*pauruṣa*) and intellectual (*bauddha*).[36] While ignorance functions as a kind of veil that hides the luminosity of the essential nature of the self, it is the impurity (*āṇava-mala*) that really is responsible in giving gives rise to ignorance. This inherited impurity, on the one hand, terminates in the emergence of the impurity of differentiation (*māyīya-mala*) and the impurity of action (*kārma-mala*) and, on the other hand, gives rise to such forms of knowledge and action that are either dualistic or limited.[37] In this manner both ignorance and impurity go hand in hand insofar as the causing of bondage is concerned—and bondage is nothing but the experience of non-freedom and in terms of which finitude and limitation are identified as being the essential part of the self. Although ignorance may be bginningless (*anādi*), yet it can be removed through such theoretical and practical means that the Trika has prescribed.

In contrast to bondage or non-freedom, there is the state of liberation or of freedom (*mokṣa, mukti*). Freedom from bondage,

or to put it in the language of Trika, from the sense of limitation or finitude, is nothing but the experiential realisation of the union of identity between the supposedly finite self and the infinite Self, which is but Paramaśiva itself. Freedom, in the language of Pratyabhijñā philosophy, denotes the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) concerning one's own-being, which, from a practical point of view, means the attainment of the primordial and natural state of I-consciousness (*akṛtrima-ahaṃ-vimarśa*). As to what this state of I-consciousness is, is explained by Utpaladeva thus:

> The inner Self-awareness shining as "I," though being conscious light (*prakāśa*) in its essence and having (subtle) speech as its form, is not any definite mental idea (*vikalpa*). This is because an idea, being decisive in its character, rejects all possible similar ideas, inviting duality (of "that" and "not of that").[38]

This is exactly what Abhinavagupta says concerning the content of liberation when he asserts that "the state of liberation is nothing else other than being aware of one's own intrinsic nature." This awareness of one's essential nature in terms of awareness of being I-consciousness (*ahaṃ-vimarśa*) when expressed in theological terms denotes the realisation of identity of the so-called limited self with Paramaśiva. Upon the realisation of the unity of Being there occurs the transformation of the individual consciousness (*citta*) into what may be called the Universal Consciousness (*cit*).[39] In the state of bondage there is hardly any awareness as to what is constitutive of one's essential nature—and for this reason it is equated with non-freedom. The state of liberation emerges upon the complete eradication of impurities, which results in the rising of knowledge that is perfectly poised towards the realisation of one's essential nature as being nothing else than I-consciousness. Upon the removal of the obscuring factors, which basically are the products of *māyā*, there dawns the knowledge concerning one's own-being, and as a result of it there eventuates the disappearance of the imaginary distinctions and of limitations with regard to the Self.[40] The salvific knowledge is basically the gnosis of the "transcendental I" (*prakāśa*) as being the pure "I am" (*ahaṃ vimarśa*). It means that the pure Being is simultaneously also the self-conscious bliss (*ānanda*), which reflects or

expresses itself as perfect freedom of will.

The knowledge or realisation of one's own-being (*svarūpa*) is not to be treated as a kind of acquisition or attainment of something that one was not prior to this acquisition. Liberation is nothing else but the realisation of the essential nature of the Self as being identical with Paramaśiva in terms of absolute autonomy. This knowledge of Self as pure Being, perfect bliss and freedom emerges upon the negation of ignorance, and thereby of impurities, and which simultaneously parallels with the emergence of innate knowledge (*pauruṣa-jñāna*). This liberative knowledge, in the ultimate sense of the word, is the knowledge of identity with Paramaśiva, and in this is thus affirmed the Upaniṣadic supreme gnositic statement, which is: "All this is *brahman.*" It is an all-inclusive experience in terms of which everything is dissolved (*kṣaya*) into the Supreme Self.[41] As a result of this realisation of identity, there arises the vision that affirms that whatever is without is but the projection of that that is within in terms of one's own glory (*aiśvarya*).[42] The one who has the Beatific Vision of identity is spoken of as being liberated-while-alive (*jīvanmukta*). For the liberated-one everything pulsates, shines forth as well as shimmers with the undifferentiated fulness of the bliss of the Absolute, which is but Paramaśiva. It is an experience in terms of which is proclaimed that Śiva is All (*omnia in omnibus*). Thus liberated-one, in the words of Abhinavagupta, is the one who

> has continuously practised burying (*samāveśa*) in Śiva and nas fully recognised energies of knowledge and activity as being the pure freedom of the Lord can then know and do all he desires even though he is still associated with the body. He is not only deified, in the ordinary sense of the word, but he is fundamentally free because he uses . . . the divine powers of will belonging to Paramaśiva and lives in eternal freedom.[43]

It is now quite explicit that the Trika understanding of liberation consists in recognising the essential unity of the Self with the Absolute in terms of the experience of perfect freedom (*svātantrya*) and fulness (*pūrṇatva*). This freedom and fulness is nothing else than the experience of non-difference between *mokṣa* and *bhoga.* So release from bondage is not so much freedom

from suffering as much it is such a transcendental experience in which are resolved the dialectic of conflicts that owe their existence to the dualised thought-forms. Thus the liberated-one looks at life-in-the-world as well as at the world from the soteric perspective of freedom and fulness, which for him signifies that whatever there is, is permeated by the fulness of the Lord. In this manner does he transcend the pair of opposites like love and hate, good and evil, pleasure and pain, etc. In the state of Beatific Vision, or what technically is called *the state beyond the fourth* (*turyātīta*). The character of the experience is ineffable precisely because it is characterised by transcendence. Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra* (chap. 2) has beautifully expressed as to what is constitutive of this transcendent experience thus:

> All this is therefore one Reality—a Reality undivided by time, unconditioned by space, unenfeebled by accidents, unconstrained by configurations, unexpressed by words and unmanifested by norms of knowledge. It is the cause, at its own will and pleasure, of the attainment of the essences of these things, from time to norms. It is the sovereignly free Reality, the concentration of beatitude. And I am absolutely It—there, within me, is reflected the universe.[44]

The Methods of Liberation

It is *a priori* assumed that the state of embodied existence is one of bondage, and freedom from such bondage must be the ultimate goal of life. As to how to reach this ultimate goal of freedom is enunciated in terms of the soteriology that each religious denomination has, in the light of its metaphysical thinking, prescribed such means or methods as would be appropriate for its followers. The Trika has also formulated its soteriological methods of liberation within the framework of its metaphysical-cum-theological understanding of reality as well as of life-in-the-world.

The Trika approach to liberation as well as to the methods of liberation (*mokṣa-upāya*) have to be viewed in the context of its understanding of divine grace (*śaktipāta*) as being the fundamental soteriological tool.[45] As grace is considered as the basic *raison d'être* of liberation, so it is natural for the Trika thinkers to assert

that mere knowledge of an object does not necessarily terminate in the experience of joy. In the context of liberation it would mean that liberation is not realised simply by knowing the qualities of the Self. It is, instead, realised only when, through the operation of grace, the liberative methods become so efficacious as would remove such veils of ignorance or impurities that conceal the self-shining nature of the Self. It is on account of grace that there dawns such recognitive gnosis whereby the Upaniṣadic proclamation—Thou Art That (*tat tvam asi*)—is realised in terms of the experience of non-difference. It is through the experience of non-difference that one plunges into the redemptive plenitude of blissful freedom. This immediate awareness concerning the essential nature as being identical with I-consciousness emerges either by receiving spiritual instruction or by going through the process of initiation (*dīkṣā*). The very initiation by, or instructions from, a guru is itself the outcome of divine grace. The descent of grace is not dependent as to how much merit we have accumulated. It is absolutely a free gift of God. It is, thus, right to say that it is through grace that the Lord reveals himself to whomsoever he chooses to revel.[46]

While making grace the fundamental cause of liberation, Trika thereby does not discount the role that self-effort plays insofar as the realisation of the ultimate soteriological goal of liberation is concerned. The very effort of trudging upon the salvific path of liberation is, according to the Trika, the outcome of the descent of grace. However, the descent of grace is dependent as to what kind of spiritual progress an individual has made. If the individual has just begun his spiritual sojourn, he cannot expect grace to be intense; it will be of low intensity (*manda*). A person who is somewhat advanced spiritually, for him the fall of grace would be of medium (*madhya*) intensity. A person who has however burnt out most of his previous *saṃskāras* can expect the fall of grace that would be intense (*tīvra*).[47] It would, thus, mean that the spiritual progress towards liberation would be dependent as to the kind of grace one may receive.

Once there is the descent of grace, then there ensues its functioning in terms of which the individual aspirant is asked by his guru to follow such spiritual method as would be appropriate

for him. The method could be philosophical, physical or mental. The philosophical method that the Trika considers being most appropriate is that of "recognition" (*pratyabhijñā*). Recognition of one's essential nature as being non-different from Maheśvara is said to terminate in the soteric freedom and in terms of which is realised the blissful fulness of I-consciousness. Recognition, however, must not be identified either with memory (*smṛti*) or with perceptual cognition (*pratykṣa-jñāna*). It is, rather, the combination of both. Memory is given rise due to the activation of the subliminal impressions (*saṃskāra*-s). Although through perception an object may be cognised as well as perceived, but it is never recognised. In the event of recognition what happens is that the mental impression goes invariably along with the direct perception of the object. The uniqueness of recognition lies in the fact that the object that is being cognised is easily identified with the object that has previously been known. Thus recognition is characterised by an intuitive awareness with regard to the identity of the substance that persists through its two states.

As to what recognition denotes practically is illustrated in terms of an example of a lady who is desirous of being loved. She is told of a man who is supposed to be in possession of such qualities that the lady wants to have in her husband. There eventuates a chance when the lady meets him without knowing that this is the person about whom she has been informed. Upon encountering him, she immediately "recognises" that this is the person whom she has desired as her husband. As a result of recognition she overflows with the bliss of joy. This is what recognition is all about.

The practical method that the Pratyabhijñā prefers is that of meditation on the five cosmic functions (*pañca-kṛtya*) of the Lord as well as upon the use of such techniques of meditation that enhances the dissolution of thought-constructs (*vikalpa-kṣaya*). All these five activities of the Lord, which are emanation (*sṛṣṭi*), persistence (*sthiti*), dissolution (*saṃhāra*), concealment (*vilaya*) and revelation (*anugraha*), are, according to the Trika, constantly occurring within each individual being. While meditating upon these five activities of the Lord, the aspirant is accordingly asked to rise from below upward in such a manner as to perceive the

inner essence of each of them. Thus the act of emanation is said to denote a specific place and time with reference to the individual. Likewise persistence signifies the preservation of enjoyment of what the individual perceives. Dissolution is seen as a process of absorption in the delight of I-consciousness. This process of dissolution is contraction (*saṃkoca*) with regard to what has been emanated. Even when this delight is withdrawn, there remains its impression, which rises again when absorption eventuates. Finally, when there is complete submergence of this delight into I-consciousness, there occurs revelation. Corresponding to this method of meditation is the dissolution of thought-constructs. It is an accepted fact that the mind is a breeding-ground for all kinds of thoughts, and due to the complexity of thoughts there eventuates disturbance in the mind. The placidity or stillness of the mind, however, cannot be realised by forcing the mind to suppress its activities. Suppression of the mind would give rise to more agitation. Thus the only way of overcoming the enormity of thoughts is to dissolve them through the process of alert passivity, which is to say that one must think of nothing, but allow the mind to release itself from the grip of thoughts. In this manner is achieved stillness, which finally terminates in the immersion (*samāveśa*) into divine consciousness.[48]

It is within the framework of the doctrines of grace and of recognition that the Trika has formulated its practical methods of liberation in such a manner as would suit the mental and emotional disposition of each individual being. The ones who are endowed with sharp intellect or are spiritually far advanced need not trudge the inferior paths of liberation. They are asked to plunge directly in such superior spiritual methods that terminate in the immediate recognition concerning the intrinsic nature of the Self. It is within the perspective of such a vision that the Trika has formulated the four main methods of liberation, which are the Way of the Individual (*āṇavopāya*), the Way of Energy (*śāktopāya*), the Way of Śiva (*śāmbhavopāya*) and the Null Method (*anopāya*).[49] The Null Method in the series of methods is no-method on account of the fact that no physical or mental exertion is involved in it and for this reason it is given the nomenclature of Null Method (*anopāya*). The first two methods,

being inferior in comparison to the other two methods, are dependent for their fructification either on physical exertion or on mental deliberation. Insofar as the last two methods are concerned, they fully operate within the framework of such grace that is intense, and so accordingly terminate immediately in the delight of I-consciousness.[50]

The process of liberation occurs in such a manner as to be reverse to the order of manifestation. The order of manifestation occurs from *śiva-tattva* down to *pṛthvī-tattva*, whereas the order of liberation occurs in terms of evolutionary ascension from the category of earth to the category of Śiva. The order of manifestation occurs through the levels of bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*), which parallel the four levels of manifestation of the Word (*vāk*) in terms of the Transcendent (*parā*), the Seeing (*paśyanti*), the Middling (*madhyamā*) and the Gross (*vaikharī*). At the subjective level the upward spiritual ascension occurs in terms of the waking state (*jāgrat-avasthā*) being dissolved into that of dream state (*svapna-avasthā*), dream state into that of deep sleep (*suṣupti-avasthā*), the state of deep sleep into the Fourth (*turya*), and the Fourth into *the beyond the fourth* (*turyātīta*). The first two methods of liberation, also known as the Way of Action (*kriyopāya*) and the Way of Knowledge (*jñānopāya*), correspond to the manifestational levels of *jñāna* and *kriyā*, whereas the last two methods, also known as *icchopāya* and *ānandopāya*, parallel the *icchā* and *ānanda* levels of manifestation.[51]

The first method, namely, the *āṇavopāya*, is spoken of as being inferior in comparison to other methods on account of its dependence on such practices as are purely external, viz., physical in nature. Also lot of effort is involved in pursuing this method. It is due to the involvement of much effort that this method is also spoken of as the Way of Action (*kriyopāya*). The practices that are pursued in this method consist in the performance of rituals, of offering oblation in the fire-sacrifice, of meditating on a chosen deity, of engaging in the practice of repetition of mantra (*mantra-japa*), of following such yogic methods that are characterised by physical exertion like, for example, *prāṇāyāma*. Also the aspirant makes use of his *karaṇas* (senses) in such a

manner as would be so transformative as to terminate in Self-realization. The goal of Self-realization is reached when there occurs the unfoldment of what in this system is called the *madhya-dhāma* or *suṣumṇā*. While following this method, the aspirant begins spiritual praxis from the standpoint of difference and finally ends in the experience of non-difference.

The next method is that of the Way of Energy (*śāktopāya*). Since the spiritual practices of this method are more mental than physical in nature, so this is also known as that of the Way of Knowledge (*jñānopāya*). The aspirant of this method, while having transcended the dualistic pattern of his thinking, begins his approach to reality in terms of difference-cum-non-difference (*bhedābheda*). This method consists of in such mental practices as would terminate in the immersion (*samāveśa*) of the individual consciousness into the Divine. It is through the power of mantra (*mantra-śakti*) that the aspirant is endowed with the intuitive faculty of knowledge (*pratibhā-jñāna*). While ascending upwards, the aspirant reaches such a spiritual state whereby the individual consciousness merges in *parā-saṃvid*. As to the kind of state that is attained by following this method is expressed by Utpaladeva thus: "Upon touching the soles of thy feet, there flashes in my mind as if the whole world has immersed into the lake of nectar. Lord, may you always grant this to me!"[52]

Insofar as the Way of Śiva (*śāmbhavopāya*), also known as the Way of the Will (*icchopāya*), is concerned, it is meant for those aspirants who are spiritually highly evolved. The aspirant of this method realizes the consciousness of Śiva by meditating on the category called Śiva (*śiva-tattva*). Initially the aspirant begins with such forms of meditation as would lead to the dissolving of thoughts (*vikalpa-kṣaya*) and thereby to the affirmation that the world is but the reflection of supreme consciousness. At the end of the journey the aspirant has the experience of I-consciousness. Moreover, the aspirant makes use of his "will" in such a manner as would lead to the perfect knowledge of identity with the Absolute.[53] It is such a method whereby perfect identity can be induced at will. The realisation of the Absolute is such as to lead to the understanding of the world as being an emanation and play (*krīḍā*) of Śiva and Śakti. The descent of grace is of such

intensity as to result in the immediate dawning of the supernal knowledge and in terms of which is experienced that everything is vibrating with the delightful sensation of the cosmic throb.

The last method, viz., the Null Method (*anopāya*), also known as the Way of Bliss (*ānandopāya*),[54] is such a method as to be permeated by the presence of grace. The divine grace may come either from guru or may directly descend upon the aspirant. As a result of grace there is immediate realisation of the Self (*ātma-vyāpti*) as well as of the Absolute (*śiva-vyāpti*). While transcending the dependence upon the external or internal instruments, the aspirant enjoys perfect freedom (*svātantrya*), which is equated with the experience of divine bliss. It is a path that is not constricted by the flickering perceptions of the mind or by the attachment for the world, and so for the yogi of this path everything is transformed into the glorious worship of the supreme. Finally, Abhinavagupta expresses the experience that the yogi has thus:

> It is (none else but) Śiva Himself who, being (of the nature of) unconstrained Will and pure Consciousness, is uninterruptedly shining in my heart. It is (none else but) his Supreme Energy that continuously plays on the edge of my senses. This whole universe (that we experience and perceive) is filled with the ever wondrous delight of I-consciousness. In fact, I know not as to what the sound "world" refers to.[55]

References

1. The term *pratyabhijñā*, according to Abhinavagupta, consists of *prati + abhi + jñānam. Prati* is said to denote *pratīpam*, viz., that which is contrary, or that which, though known, is now forgotten due to the delusion of ignorance. *Abhi* means facing, or that which is close at hand, whereas *jñānam* means illumination. So *pratyabhijñā* is such a form of "recognition" whereby one comes to know as to what is the essential nature of the Self.
2. Mādhavācārya in his *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha* refers to the Trika as the School of Recognition.
3. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* 2.2.15: *tameva bhāntaṃ anubhāti sarvaṃ, tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṃ vibhāti/*
4. Vide *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī* (*IPV*), 1.1.2.
5. Ibid.

6. *Parāpraveśikā*, p. 2: *akṛtrimāhaṃ iti visphuraṇaṃ . . ./*
7. Ibid., p. 2: *yadi nirvimarśaḥ syāt anīśvaro jaḍaśca prasajyeta/*
8. *Parātriśikā-vivaraṇa* (*PTV*), v. 9.
9. *Tantrāloka* (*TA*), 1.104.
10. Ibid., 1.154.
11. Ibid., 1.59–60.
12. Ibid., 2.16, 30.
13. *Mālinī-vijayavārttika* (*MVV*), 1.
14. *IPV*, 1.8.11.
15. Ibid., 1.2.4.
16. *TA*, 1.70.
17. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā (IPK)*, 1.5.10.
18. *TA*, 1.92.
19. Ibid., 3.119.
20. *Parātriśikā*, v. 24.
21. Quoted in Jaideva Singh's *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, p. 17.
22. *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, *sūtra* 1.
23. *Bhāskarī*, ed. and trans. K.A.S. Iyer and K.C. Pandey, repr., 3 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986, 2.211: *śrīmat-sadāśivodāra-prārambhaṃ vasudhāntakaṃ/*
24. *TA*, 1.25.
25. Ibid., 1.58.
26. See Śaṅkarācārya's *Hymn to Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, v. 1.
27. *Paramārthasāra*, vv. 12–13:
    darpaṇa-bimbe-yadvan nagara-grāmādi citramavibhāgi/
    bhāti vibhāgenaiva ca parasparaṃ darpaṇādapi ca//
    vimalatama-parama-bhairava-bodhāt tadvad vibhāga-śūnyamapi/
    anyonyaṃ ca tato'pi ca vibhaktamābhāti jagadetat//
28. *IPK*, 1.5.7: *cidātmaiva hi devo'ntaḥ-sthitaṃ icchā-vaśād bahiḥ/*
    yogīva nirupādānaṃ artha-jātāṃ prakāśayet//
29. *IPK*, 1.5.12–14: *ātmatā eva caitanyaṃ cit-kriyā citikartṛtā/*
    tat paryenoditas tena jaḍāt sa hi vilakṣaṇaḥ//
    cittiḥ pratyavamarśātmā parāvāk sva-rasoditā/
    svātantryaṃ etan mukhyaṃ tad aiśvaryaṃ paramātmanaḥ//
    sa sphurattā mahāsattā deśa-kālāviśeṣinī/ saiṣā sāratayā proktā hṛdayaṃ parameṣṭhinaḥ//
30. *TA*, 1.54–56.
31. Mark Dyczkowski, trans., *The Stanzas on Vibration*, Albany: Sunny Press, 1992, p. 38.
32. *IPV*, 4.1.15.
33. *Tantrasāra*, trans. Jose Pereira, in: *Hindu Theology*, repr. Delhi:

Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 38.
34. *TA*, 1.23: *malaṃ ajñānaṃ icchanti saṃsārāṅkurakāraṇam/*
35. *Tantrasāra*, 5.
36. *TAV*, 1.36.
37. *TA*, 1.54, 56; 6.76.
38. B.N. Pandit, trans., *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004, 1.6.1, p.71: *ahaṃ pratyavamarśo yaḥ prakāśātmāpi vāg-vapuḥ/nāsau vikalpaḥ sa hy ukto dvayākṣepī viniścayaḥ//*
39. See *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*, *sūtra* 13.
40. *TA*, 1.24: *pauruṣam punar jñānaṃ uditaṃ sat anyanirapekṣam eva mokṣa kāraṇam/*
41. *Paramārthasāra*, v. 48: *mayyeva bhāti viśvaṃ darpaṇa iva nirmale ghaṭādinī/*
mattaḥ prasarati sarvaṃ svapna-vicitratvamiva suptāt// See also *TA*, 1.156.
42. *IPK*, 4.1.12: *so'haṃ mamāyaṃ vibhava ity evaṃ parijānataḥ/ viśvātmano vikalpānāṃ prasare'pi maheśatā//*
43. *IPV*, 4.1.15. The verse of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, on which Abhinava has commented, runs like this: *evaṃ ātmanaṃ etasya samyag-jñāna-kriye tathā/ paśyan yathepsitān arthān jānāti ca karoti ca//*
44. *Tantrasāra*, trans. Jose Pereira, *Hindu Theology*, repr. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 376.
45. *IPV*, 1.1.1.
46. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.23: *yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ/*
47. *TA*, 13.142.
48. See *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ*, *sūtra* 11.
49. *TA*, 1.258.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 1.186–87.
52. *Śivastotrāvalī*, 5.26.
53. *TA*, 1.235.
54. Ibid., 2.3.
55. Quoted by Maheśvarānanda, in: *Mahārthamañjarī*, p. 25.

3

The Philosophical Orientation of Trika Spirituality

THE TRIKA SPIRITUALITY has such a philosophical orientation as to be, through and through, anthropological, in that it begins its inquiry, as did Rene Descartes, with human subjectivity, viz., with the self. It is possible for a logical skeptic to doubt the validity of such assertions that are metaphysical on account of them being empirically non-verifiable, but it would be impossible for him to doubt the statement that asserts that he exists. The existence of one's own self is not dependent on some external proof or on a statement that may be issued by someone that such and such person really exists. The existence of the self is not in need of an external proof precisely because it is self-proved. Equally there is no need to depend on such internal aids for the proof of the self as, for example, the senses, mind or intellect. It is so because the existence of the self persists even when the so-called means of knowledge, whether external or internal, disappear in the state of deep sleep. The self's persistence in deep sleep as a witness is testified by the fact that the individual being, upon coming out of deep sleep, recollects as to what kind of experience he had in the state of void-like deep sleep. It establishes the fact that the self persists even when everything disappears in the void of sleep. This simple analysis tells us that the self is self-evident, self-existent, and self-conscious.

The above approach concerning the existence of the self is both empirical and intellectual. As an intellectual enterprise, we are able to affirm that there is within us such a principle by which we know whatever we know. However, this empirical

knowledge is not of such nature as would disclose or reveal as to what is constitutive of this self. It is because of this non-knowing of the nature (*svabhāva*) of the self that terminates in such identification of it that is erroneous. As a result of this erroneous knowledge, we identify this self, or what is called ego, with the body, with the senses, with the principle of animation. The exact nature of the self, according to the Trika, can only be apprehended in the Fourth (*turya*) yogic state. This yogic state is such as would transcend the three normal empirical states, namely, those of waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), and deep sleep (*suṣupti*). Each one of us in outline can have the experience of the Fourth State as and when, for example, we may be emotionally in a surcharged pitch provided we are attentive. This attentiveness in the Trika terminology is called *avadhāna*. However, the yogi who has reached the state of *turya* has the cognitive realization that it is the self that exists everywhere, and so is present everywhere, which means that nothing exists apart from the self. In the terminology of Pratyabhijñā philosophy, the yogi comes to know that the essential nature of the Self is consciousness (*prakāśa*) and cognitive self-awareness (*vimarśa*).

The Trika description of the self as being both consciousness and cognitive awareness is based not so much on conceptual speculation as much on the yogic experience of the Fourth. The self as consciousness is not only light, but is also self-awareness on account of having an innate stir or vibration (*spanda*). The nature of consciousness as being stir is reflected in each one of us in the form of will (*icchā*) at that moment when we desire to have knowledge of something or want to perform certain actions. This urge within us to know and to do is the result of will, and will is activated because of the vibratory content of consciousness. This is borne out by the fact that each one of us has some kind of knowledge of the self, and this very knowing is nothing but action (*kriyā*). Execution of action is not possible apart from knowledge, and both of them are dependent upon will. According to the Trika thinking, will is nothing but the externalization of the stir of consciousness.[1] This stir in consciousness is neither like physical vibration, as is that of sound, nor a mental movement like that of desire. It should be seen as a kind of spiritual stir that vibrates

simultaneously both outwardly and inwardly. This stir in consciousness occurs because it is the essential nature of consciousness to vibrate.

The inward and outward stir of consciousness shines as I-ness (*ahaṃ*) at the subjective level and as this-ness (*idaṃ*) at the objective level. It is because of this twofold nature of vibration that a yogi, when in the state of *turya,* has the experience of the Self as being both transcendent and immanent. When the Self shines as the transcendental absolute, it is spoken of as Paramaśiva or Maheśvara. The state in which the Self, due to its own lustre of consciousness, shines as Maheśvara is known as *turyātīta,* viz., the state that transcends the Fourth. It is a state in which the Absolute shines as pure Ego, thereby transcending both the transcendent and the immanent aspects of reality. It is a state of pure Ego alone. Nothing else shines in it except the Ego. This Ego as the luminous consciousness (*prakāśamayī*) does not simply shine like the inert diamond. It shines as self-reflecting consciousness, which means that the Absolute is aware of itself as being consciousness. This self-cognitive awareness of the Absolute as consciousness is termed *saṃvid.* Were the absolute Ego not aware of itself as Ego, then it would be nothing. However, this Ego must not be identified with the physical body (*deha*), the subtle body (*puryāṣṭaka*), or with the causal body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*). Equally it must not be identified with the deep sleep (*śūnya*) either.

Since the Absolute as consciousness has stir as its essential nature, it means that It constantly manifests itself both at the transcendental and phenomenal levels through the process of introversion and extroversion. This dyadic movement of introversion and extroversion of the Absolute is, at the theological level of thought, termed as the Divine Couple, namely, Śiva and Śakti. Although the entire phenomena exist in Paramaśiva, it does not, however, shine as phenomena at the transcendental level. It shines in terms of complete identity with the Absolute in the same manner as a potential plant in a seed. What it means is that the entire phenomena in the Absolute exists as potency, and as such is identical with it as pure consciousness. The universe as potency takes the phenomenal form when it, like the potency of a plant in a seed, externalizes itself. Thus as potency the universe

exists in Paramaśiva as his Śakti.[2]

From this description it must be clear by now that Śiva and Śakti are not two distinct entities existing as polar opposites to each other, but are two aspects of one and same reality, which is Paramaśiva. These two aspects reflect the non-changing as well as manifesting aspects of the Absolute: Śiva representing the state of non-change, whereas Śakti represents the tendency towards manifestation. This state of perfect unity is known as the stage of Śakti on account of the fact that all the categories (*tattvas*) exist and shine at this level in the form of Śakti. The tendency towards objective manifestation of that that exists potentially in the Absolute is initiated in the manner of a reflection. This movement towards manifestation is the result of the divine playfulness of the Lord. Initially the movement or urge towards objective manifestation shines faintly within the lustre of pure I-consciousness. Thus the objective manifestation as this-ness, at the initial stage, is as unclear as is the urge or desire for manifestation. Thus this incipient tendency for manifestation represents the state of unity-in-diversity, because the principle of unity has not been so harmed as would terminate in the actual manifestation of objectivity. This downward movement of Paramaśiva is a process that is initiated at the stage of Śakti towards the external manifest order of objectivity, which of course is still in its incipient stage. Since the actual manifestation in terms of "this" and "I" has not yet occurred, so the stage of manifestation that is eventuated is known as that of Vidyā.

Paramaśiva as consciousness, even at the stage of Vidyā, vibrates within uninterruptedly, and as a result of this vibration (*spanda*) there occurs outward manifestation of what is called Māyā. At the stage of Māyā the manifestation is so actualized as to be characterized by the phenomenal diversity, and in terms of which "this-ness" stands, as it were, at the opposite pole of "I-ness." This objective manifestation is neither the mere projection of mind nor is it the chimera of heightened imagination. It is real, actual and true. This process of outward manifestation of what exists potentially within Being is termed in Trika as *kalpanā*. *Kalpanā*, however, is not imagination, because imagination is the result of the flutter in the mind, whereas *kalpanā* basically is the outward

manifestation of what actually exists within the subject, which in our case is Paramaśiva. Prior to its manifestation, the manifest object shines in the form of pure Ego, which means that it is identical with the subject. At the stage of Śakti the so-called objectivity shines as pure Ego. At the level of Māyā, however, the phenomena, being gross, appear as "this," and so are said to be impure. The intermediate stage between Śakti and Māyā, which is that of Vidyā and reflects the state of unity-in-diversity, is termed as being pure when compared to the gross and impure manifestation of diversity.

The first part of the drama of universal manifestation is enacted by Paramaśiva at the stage of Śakti, which is that of pure unity, which passes through the stage of Vidyā in the form of unity-in-diversity and ultimately terminates in the objective diversification at the stage of Māyā. The second part of the drama that Paramaśiva enacts is quite reverse to the order of manifestation. The process of withdrawal or ascension characterizes the second part of the drama. It is a movement of ascension from the stage of Māyā via Vidyā to that of Śakti, or should we say the stage of Māyā is dissolved into that of Vidyā, and that of Vidyā into the state of Śakti. Thus the play of the Lord consists of the dyadic movement of descent and ascent, of manifestation and withdrawal, of expansion and contraction. While engaged in this twofold drama of manifestation and withdrawal, there occurs no change insofar as the essential nature of the Absolute is concerned. The Absolute constantly and always shines as I-consciousness. This is so because whatever is manifested is manifested as reflection. Whatever is reflected at the stages of Śakti, Vidyā, and Māyā outwardly in the form of objective universe are but the powers of the Absolute. This entire process of manifestation is the result of the will of the Lord, which in actuality means that the Lord just wills to appear in the form of finite entities. Reverse to it is the process of withdrawal, and this process begins when the Lord wills to recognize his essential nature and as a result of this there occurs the desire within a finite being to recollect his divine nature in terms of identity with the Absolute. Thus, according to the Trika thinking, the whole range of beings and objective entities, including the means of knowing and doing, are nothing but the

condensed or gross form of the will of the Lord.

The manifestation of the universe is not the work of an individual mind or of a cosmic mind precisely because the universe, prior to its manifestation, exists as potency within the Absolute, which means that it remains in the state of perfect identity with Paramaśiva. Since the universe is nothing but the externalization of what already exists within the Absolute, so it would be erroneous to hold the view that the entire objective order is a mere illusion or is non-existent like the barren woman's son or like the sky flower. The manifest condition of the universe is actual and real. What is considered to be unreal in the Trika are such concepts as, for example, barren woman's son or sky flower. They are termed as being unreal because such objects in actuality neither exist nor do such conjectural concepts serve any purpose. Although the universe may be a real manifestation, yet it, according to the Trika, is not so real as to be absolutely real. It is so because it is a manifestation in the manner of reflection. Also the objective aspect of the universe cannot be said to be ultimately real on account of its emanation in time, and that which is emanated in time has an end. Moreover, the universe does not exist apart from consciousness. The universe is there insofar we know it through knowledge, and knowledge is nothing but the manifest form of consciousness. The world, thus, is but the reflection of the power of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*), which means that it appears as reflection inside the mirror of our understanding. Thus the world shines in the mirror of our understanding in the form of ideas, and the ideas are apprehended through word-images, which constitutes what is known as *vikalpa-jñāna*, or knowledge through thought-constructs. Thus it is our mind, or what is broadly called the faculty of understanding, that helps us in the formation of ideas—and it is these mental ideas that illumine the object, and thereby facilitate the arising of knowledge. Whatever determinate knowledge we have, it is always conceptual. However, there is also knowledge that is indeterminate, and therefore non-conceptual. Such knowledge is termed as *nirvikalpa-jñāna*, or indeterminate knowledge.

Since indeterminate knowledge is devoid of conceptuality, so it means that it does not terminate in the arising of knowledge

that is based on name or form of the object. The phenomenal knowledge that has its source in name and form is accordingly said to be conceptual. Whatever mundane transactions are carried out, they are dependent on such concepts that are formed by certain conventions with regard to words and their meanings. It all boils down to the fact that empirical knowledge has its source in concepts that are determinate and definite. The entire order of phenomenal existence shines in and through such knowledge that is concept-driven. This idea-driven knowledge is knowledge that is termed as the knowledge of the intellect (*buddhi-jñāna* or *saṃvṛti*). The ontological status that the world enjoys is based on *saṃvṛti-jñāna*, which means that its status is secondary when compared to that which is absolutely real (*paramārtha-satya*). Both forms of knowledge are true in their own spheres, and this is how Abhinavagupta, in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*,[3] has explained it: *samvṛtir vikalpa-buddhis, tadvaśāducatām saṃvṛti-satyatvam, satyatvasyaiva tu prakaras tat.* From this it may be concluded that the universe is real at all the three stages of manifestation, viz., at the stages of Śakti, Vidyā, and Māyā, although it may shine differently at different stages of manifestation. Utpaladeva confirms this assertion when he says that the phenomena are real whether they shine inwardly in the pure I-consciousness or outwardly in the realm of Māyā. He says: *"cinmayatve ābhāsanām antareva sthitiḥ sadā, māyayā bhāsamānām bāhyatvād bahira apy asau."*[4]

From the discussion so far it must be quite clear that the orientation of Trika philosophy is such as to synthesize idealism and realism in a manner that is appropriate. In this manner the Trika does not dismiss either form of philosophical thought, but rather accepts the valid points of both of them. The Trika philosophical thinking may be said to be idealistic to the measure it accepts consciousness to be the sole reality, which means that nothing has the possibility to exist apart from consciousness. It is realistic insofar as it accepts the phenomena as the appearance (*ābhāsa*) of consciousness as being real and actual. The appearance of phenomena is not a chimera of heightened imagination. The phenomena are not unreal, as are the objects of illusion or of dream. While affirming the appearance of

phenomena as real, the Trika thereby adumbrates realism.

It is in the context of this synthetical philosophical orientation that the Trika maintains that whatever phenomena there are, they enjoy free and authentic existence in what it calls pure consciousness. When these phenomena, at the level of Māyā, appear in diverse forms, it is simply their manifest condition or state. This state of manifestation of phenomena is technically called *ābhāsa.* Thus, according to the Trika, the phenomena are nothing but the manifest state of what, prior to their manifestation, exist as pure potentiality within the Absolute. Moreover, we relate ourselves only with such entities that become manifest, through the means of concepts, in our knowledge. Such a view or understanding would denote that conceptuality is basically nothing but manifestation. The entire manifest order would have to be considered as being nothing but appearances. It is this type of idealistically driven doctrine of appearance (*ābhāsavāda*) that the Trika has propounded. However, the Trika idealism differs from other forms of idealistic thinking. While looking at the objective entities as being appearances of the Absolute, Trika at the same time thinks of these appearances to be real, and not a mere projection of the mind. The manifest entities are real precisely because of them being not only causally efficient, but also because of them being the targets of knowledge and action. It is in this context that Utpaladeva, for example, asserts that action, relativity, compound, space, time, substance, etc., enjoy real existence on account of them having existed uninterruptedly as well as being causally efficient. Thus says he: *kriyā-saṃbandha-sāmānya-dravya-dik-kāla-buddhayaḥ; satyāḥ sthairyopayogābhayām ekanekāśrayā matāḥ.*[5]

This theory of appearance tells us that the entire range of categories from Sadāśiva to earth is but *ābhāsa.* The appearance of these categories has to be accepted as being real, which means that their existence cannot be doubted. It is so because they have always been existing within the Absolute, and thereby have been shining as being identical with pure I-consciousness. The very existing of these categories as potentiality within Paramaśiva authenticates their reality. The manifest condition of these entities may entail their origin and end, yet their reality, as having their

existence in Paramaśiva, cannot be doubted.[6] The phenomena as being absolutely real delineates the idea of everything being of spiritual nature, because whatever exists outwardly has its eternal existence, in the form of potency, in Paramaśiva. In this manner has Trika successfully brought logical synthesis between idealism and realism, thereby avoiding the extreme viewpoints of both the schools.

The kind of realism that is adumbrated by the Trika is radically different from that of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya-Yoga, and Sarvāstivāda schools. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika propound its theory of realism in terms of accepting the atom such a substance that exists eternally as well as outside the purview of the knowing subject. It is a realism that is deeply rooted in a kind of gross materialism, and the Trika Śaivism has completely rejected such a form of philosophical thinking. The atom of the Nyāya, according to the Trika, is but an emanation or manifestation of the Absolute, which means that the atoms have no possibility to exist apart from or outside of consciousness. In contrast to this gross form of materialism of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, there is subtle kind of realistic materialism propounded by Sāṅkhya-Yoga. According to Sāṅkhya-Yoga, matter or what is called the *mūla-prakṛti*, prior to its manifestation in the form of objective entities, exists in a non-manifest state in which no diversification of any kind has taken place. It is in its non-manifest and uniform state that matter contains within itself the entirety of phenomena. Thus it is the subtle substance that is seen as taking the diverse forms, in its manifest condition, of phenomenal existence. While accepting the existence of both the atoms and the *mūla-prakṛti*, the Trika Śaivism, however, does not accept the fact that they exist eternally apart from or independent of I-consciousness. For the Trika thinkers both the atoms and the *mūla-prakṛti* are nothing but the outward manifestation of the powers of the Absolute.

As far as Buddhist realism is concerned, it owes its origin to the Sarvāstivādins. It was, however, the Sautrāntika school who so interpreted the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence as to reduce everything to momentary existence. According to this school of thought, nothing lasts more than a moment, which means that every mental operation or physical event does not

last more than a moment. Thus both matter and consciousness go on appearing momentarily independent of each other. It is this concept of consciousness as well as of matter as being momentary that paved the way for the arising of Buddhist idealism in the form of consciousness-only school (*vijñānavāda*). The Vijñānavādins, while accepting the Sautrāntika theory of momentariness, reject the notion that matter exists independent of consciousness. The Vijñānavādins hold the view that the material entities are nothing but the external manifestation of mental ideas—and these mental ideas are nothing but the impressions stored in what is called the storehouse-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), or what in modern psychological terms would be called the subconscious mind. While Trika Śaivism agrees with the Vijñānavādins insofar as the rejection of external entities existing independent of consciousness (*bāhyārthavāda*) is concerned, it disagrees with them on the point of reducing objects to the status of dream-objects. Instead of reducing the external world to the status of dream-objects, the Trika upholds the view that all forms of objectivity are the manifestation (*ābhāsa*) of supreme consciousness in the manner of reflection. We cannot deny the reality of reflection. It is real. It is experienced. Even though real, reflection, however, is not so real as to be absolute. It is real in the sense of being contingent.

Since the objective universe is seen as the manifestation of I-consciousness, which vibrates uninterruptedly, so it means that the universe is essentially non-different from the Absolute. It is at the stage of Vidyā where the universe as "this" begins to appear in a simple form. However, it is at the stage of Māyā where, due to the intervention of Anantanātha, the simple "this-ness" begins to objectify itself through the emergence of five *kañcukas*, or what may be called the categories of limitation. It is due to the expansion of Māyā into five *kañcukas* that the infinite I-consciousness begins to manifest itself as the *puruṣa* of Sāṅkhya philosophy. In this manner is infinite I-consciousness reduced to the state of finitude. Accordingly the limited element of "this-ness" begins to shine in terms of what is known as *prakṛti*, which may be equated to a kind of cosmic energy. Due to the influence exerted by Śrīkaṇṭhanātha, *prakṛti* undergoes such transformation

(*pariṇāma*) as would result in the emergence of physical and mental categories, including that of mind. In this process of emanation there is no creation nor is there any kind of destruction involved. It is a process of evolutionary transformation of the basic insentient element called *mūla-prakṛti*.

The insertion of theological concepts may not be acceptable to the one who may have a sceptical bent of mind. However, the overall picture that the Trika has presented with regard to both idealism and realism is logical and thought provoking. While affirming objectivity as being but the manifestation of consciousness, it adheres to the philosophy of idealism. However this adherence to idealism does not lead the Trika to such a viewpoint whereby it may deny the reality of the world, as has been done by such idealistic schools as, for example, by the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara or by the Buddhist Vijñānavādins. The Trika subscribes to the view that the manifestation of world is real, even though it may be in the manner of reflection. The world, however, is absolutely real if viewed from the absolute viewpoint, which maintains that it is non-different from the absolute I-consciousness. In this manner the Trika spirituality seeks transcendence from the conditioned state of existence through the process of affirmation of that that is conditioned.

References

1. Somānanda, *Śivadṛṣṭi*, 1.9,10, 24, 25.
2. Ibid., 3.2–3.
3. Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 2.2.4.
4. Utpaladeva, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.8.7.
5. Ibid., 2.1.1.
6. Abhinavagupta, op. cit., 2.2.4.

4

The Trika Concept of Spanda

THE PHILOSOPHICAL-CUM-THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT of *spanda* (vibration, throb) is so conceived in Trika Śaivism as to be the facilitator for the emergence of the concept of ultimate reality as not being a mere passive and inactive consciousness, but as consisting of such dynamism as would be possible for it to give rise to the phenomenal becoming in a manner that would be one with it.[1] It is, thus, the notion of *spanda* that would allow the Trika thinkers to weave such an explanation of reality as would contrast it from the one that Advaita Vedānta has propounded in terms of *brahman* being passive (*śānta*), uninvolved and totally so abstract as to be impersonal. The Trika does not subscribe to such a notion of reality as would terminate in an inertial and death-like passivity. Although non-dualistic in orientation, Trika Śaivism, however, is at the same time sufficiently theistic, in that its Absolute is not so impersonal, inactive and abstract as to be lifeless and destitute of self-cognition. It is this idea of reality as being filled with dynamism that allowed the Trika, at the philosophical level of reflection, to speak of the Absolute as being Light (*prakāśa*) and Self-awareness (*vimarśa*). At the popular level of religiosity, reality is viewed as being polar, viz., Śiva and Śakti—the former representing consciousness and latter dynamism.[2]

The concept of reality as being of the nature of *spanda* is, for the first time, made use of by Durvāsas in his hymn, namely, *Paraśambhumahimnastva*. The idea of *spanda* is used in such a manner as to denote the absolute quality of freedom of God, and in terms of which become the divine powers so operative as to maintain the respective courses of all the mental and physical

phenomena. Also it is pointed out that true liberation from the sāṃsārika wheel is realised the moment a yogi attains perfect identity with the principle of *spanda*, which is seen to be responsible in maintaining the cosmic movement.[3] It is this notion of *spanda* that seems to have served the springboard for both Vasugupta and Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa for making it as one of the most essential ingredients in the overall development of Trika theological and philosophical thought. Vasugupta (ninth century) formulated the essential aspects of *spanda* in his *Śivasūtra*,[4] which enjoys the status of a scriptural text. He imparted the kernel of this doctrine to his disciple, namely, Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa, who lived during the middle of the ninth century. Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa gave a proper theoretical as well as practical shape to the principle of *spanda* in his *Spanda-kārikā*.[5] He also wrote a brief commentary on it. The other commentaries that have been composed on the *Spanda-kārikā* are the *Vivṛti* of Rāmakaṇṭha,[6] the *Pradīpikā* of Utpalavaiṣṇava,[7] and the *Sandoha* and *Nirṇaya* of Kṣemarāja.[8] The doctrine of *spanda* was given firmer philosophical grounding by Somānanda in his *Śivadṛṣṭi* as well as by Utpaladeva in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*. Instead of making use of the term *spanda*, these two luminaries made use of such terms as would convey the essence of this doctrine, and the terms they used are *sphūrattā*, *prasāra*, *mahāsattā*, *sāra*, etc.[9]

It was, however, Abhinavagupta (tenth century) who explained the philosophical as well as the theological significance of the doctrine of *spanda* in his several works, such as, *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*,[10] *Parātriśikāvivaraṇa*,[11] *Tantrāloka*,[12] *Tantrasāra*,[13] and so on. As to what is the etymological derivation of the term *spanda*, Abhinavagupta has fully discussed it in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, which is a commentary on the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* of Utpaladeva.

The idea of vibration that the term *spanda* conveys should not mistakenly be identified with the movement that occurs, through space, in the physical world of phenomena. The vibration that occurs in the physical world is in terms of outward movement, in the form of constant pulsation, of such phenomena as sound, heat, light, and so on. The Trika notion of vibration, however, is much broader and comprehensive, in that the vibratory

movement is not of physical nature, but is of spiritual nature, and so occurs simultaneously outwardly as well as inwardly within consciousness. This movement within consciousness is not to be seen in terms of a particular location in space, as is the case with physical movement. When there is inward movement, it is seen to be identical with what may be called subjectivity or I-ness (*ahaṃ*). Insofar as outward movement of consciousness is concerned, it is in terms of identity with objectivity or this-ness (*idaṃ*).[14] Even though *spanda* may not be seen as a movement within outer space, yet its essence is said to be so pervasive as to be the controlling centre over motion at all the levels of materiality. Not only is it the source of every form of physical motion, but also is the source of all the mental processes that occur within each individual existent.

Even though the term *spanda* means to throb or pulsate, the question is as to why *kiñcit-calanā* is added to the root *spadi*, thereby denoting that the term means to move "just a little." If the term signifies a movement, it has to be just that and nothing else. It would mean that the addition of *kiñcit* does not serve any meaningful purpose in the context of movement being nothing else than a movement. Whether a movement is of great intensity or of little intensity, it always signifies the change of position. From this reasoning it may be concluded that "just a little" in no manner can change the basic fact of movement, which is the change of position in space. If, however, pulsation or throb is considered not to be a movement, then to speak of it as being of little volume or of great volume would have no impact concerning *spanda*. So to speak of *spanda* in terms of *calanā* would be like a shell that is empty of content.

The solution to the doubts that have been raised with regard to *spanda* in terms of it being a movement or not have been answered by Abhinavagupta by explaining the root *spadi* in a secondary sense (*lakṣaṇa*). The above doubts concerning the nature of *spanda* emerge or crop up when the root *spadi* is interpreted in a direct and literal sense (*abhidhā*). The resolution of doubts is offered in considering the supreme consciousness as being *a priori* changeless, eternal and transcendent to space-time causality. In looking at supreme consciousness as being

transcendent signifies that it in no manner undergoes any kind of change or modification. Modification of an entity occurs on account of it being subject to motion, and change of any kind signifies movement. Since supreme consciousness is changeless, so to ascribe change to it would be of going against the basic metaphysical assumption that asserts the Absolute to be beyond space-time, and so free from the becoming processes of phenomena.[15]

Even though supreme consciousness is spoken of as being changeless and transcendent, yet it is assumed that there is an unnoticeable subtle stir constantly occurring within it, which means that consciousness is not like space so static or lifeless as to be inert. It is in the light of this thinking that the Trika thinkers view the absolute consciousness as being both static and dynamic, which at the religious level of worship is equated with Śiva and Śakti, and at the philosophical level of thought is spoken of as being both the Light (*prakāśa*) and Self-awareness (*vimarśa*).[16] It is the non-changing aspect of the Absolute that represents the static aspect, whereas inner spiritual stir of consciousness is seen to be embodying the dynamic aspect. It is because of this inner throb or stir that consciousness is always cognitively aware of itself as being divine. It is as Self-awareness (*vimarśa*) that the Light (*prakāśa*) of supreme consciousness is spoken of as being full of bliss (*ānanda*).[17] It is on account of this inner throb that the supreme consciousness is said to be playful, and due to this it is constantly engaged in the outward manifestation of phenomena through its five divine powers, and the function of these powers is to bring about the phenomenal manifestation, its preservation as well as its dissolution. The supreme consciousness in the process of external manifestation conceals its essential nature, which is its fourth power. The last divine power of the Absolute is said to be that of revelation. Thus this manifest universe owes its existence to this inward throb of consciousness.

The very assumption of the Trika thinkers of supreme consciousness as being endowed with inward subtle throb would mean that, while directing itself towards external manifestation, must, in one way or the other, undergo some kind of transformation. Such a conclusion seems to be unavoidable due to

the fact that whatever is characterised by motion, even if it is of subtle nature, cannot totally overcome the impact of change, which means transformation (*pariṇāma*). If such a conclusion were accepted, it would mean that the supreme consciousness, too, suffers from change, and so its indivisibility stands destroyed. In such a case it would no more be supreme, changeless and eternal, but would be as finite, and thereby susceptible to change, as any phenomenal entity.

The Trika thinkers have tried to avoid such logical contradictions like those of transformation, change, etc., by resorting to the theory of reflection (*bimba-pratibimbavāda*), which maintains that the entirety of external phenomenal manifestation has to be treated as being a mere reflection of supreme consciousness.[18] The analogy that is made use of is that of reflection in a mirror or in a pool of water. The object that is reflected, for example, in a mirror does not undergo any kind of change in the process of being reflected in the mirror. The reflection in the mirror may suffer from some kind of transformation due to some defects in a mirror, but the object that is reflected remains unchanged (*nirvikāra*). Thus the manifestation of supreme consciousness as an objective universe should be understood as a kind of divine transmutation. The so-called phenomenal diversity has to be viewed as a kind of self-division of supreme consciousness. And it is in terms of self-division that the Absolute, as it were, conceals its essential nature by atomizing itself as finite objects. In this play of self-manifestation as the universe the supreme consciousness appears as if undergoing constant change. And this inner throb can be compared to such moments of bliss that are experienced within the recesses of one's own-being. During such moments of blissful experience there emerges a kind of dynamism which is subtle yet inexplicable. Likewise the inner throb of supreme consciousness should be understood as the brimming over of absolute bliss. The appearing of the so-called change in supreme consciousness is due to the so-called semblance of movement, which is qualified by "little movement" (*kiñcit-calanā*).

It would be erroneous, however, to think of *spanda* as being equivalent to *śakti*. At the theological level of thought the concept

of *śakti* is explained in terms of Śiva being Śakti, which is to say that the Absolute is nothing else than Śiva itself.[19] The Absolute as being Śiva as well as Śakti explains both the divine transcendence and immanence. While Śiva represents transcendent aspect of the Absolute, it is Śakti that is seen as being the divine embodiment of immanence. It is so because the outward manifestation of the universe occurs due to the Śakti of the Absolute. It is because of this fact that the term *śakti* has become so inclusive and elastic as to be identical with the entirety of manifest universe. It is within this gamut of understanding that the concept of *śakti* also conveys the idea of certain steps in the process of objective manifestation. The term *spanda*, in contrast to that of *śakti*, denotes such blissful spiritual stir that continuously emerges and subsides within Śiva on account of him being identical with Śakti. In other words, it means that the rise and fall of this blissful stir within Śiva eventuates by virtue of him being Śakti, which means that Śiva is never devoid of *spanda* because of him being at the same time Śakti. Thus *spanda* may be seen as being the interior manifestation within supreme consciousness prior to the occurrence of outward manifestation.[20]

The Absolute, or what theologically is called Paramaśiva, is said to be constituted by five essential powers (*śakti*-s), which are those of consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*). The first two, however, may not be considered as the powers of the Absolute. They, rather, constitute the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of the Absolute. The Absolute is consciousness precisely because of it being both Śiva and Śakti simultaneously. In philosophical language it would mean that the Absolute is both Light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and Self-awareness (*vimarśa*). Since the Absolute is consciousness, so bliss is said to be its essential nature, which is to say that consciousness is essentially *spanda*. In theological terms we may say that *spanda* embodies the power of bliss (*ānanda-śakti*) of Paramaśiva. It is due to this blissful stir of *spanda* that there emerge the infinitely varied waves of phenomenal categories in the ocean of consciousness. It is said that *spanda* is characterised by such three phases that correspond to the categories of Paramaśiva, Śiva and Śakti. The first phase of vibratory activity (*paraspanda*)

of the Absolute is such as would be simultaneously disposed towards both the inward as well as the outward throbbing. The category of Śiva embodies the static aspect of the changeless Absolute, whereas Śakti is seen to be the dynamic aspect of the Absolute. It is due to the dynamism of Śakti that the outward throbbing within the Absolute ultimately terminates in the emergence of external manifestation. Thus the Absolute is simultaneously both Śiva and Śakti because of *spanda*, which means that *spanda* is the essential nature of the Absolute. Were the Absolute devoid of *spanda*, there would exist no objective manifestation. It would be the Absolute alone, in the absence of *spanda*, who would be existing. There could, however, be the possibility for the Absolute not to be existing all, because there would be no one to know as to whether it exists or not. But such is not the case, because the Absolute is of the nature of *spanda* and because of *spanda* there is actualised the variegated manifestation of what is known as the universe.[21]

The second phase of *spanda*, representing the category of Śiva, is said to be static and indivisible. It is such a phase of vibration that is universal (*sāmānya-spanda*). It is at this level of *spanda* in which potentially exist the diverse phenomenal entities in supreme consciousness that are constitutive of what is known as the objective universe. The potential existence of the diverse universe in supreme consciousness may be compared to the potential existence of a plant in a seed or of the colourful plumage of a peacock in an egg.[22] Insofar as the last phase of *spanda* is concerned, it represents the Śakti aspect of the Absolute, and so is said to be having a natural tendency towards the external manifestation of phenomena. It is on account of the tendency towards externalisation that this vibratory phase is referred to as that of particularised vibration (*viśeṣa-spanda*).

The externalisation of particularised vibration passes through four stages prior to the actualisation of outward manifestation. The first level is such as would result in infusing life to the manifestational process itself, and so this level is that of life-force. The next stage is such that endows the senses and the limbs of the body with life, and thereby makes them functional. The third level of *spanda* is characterised by the functioning of the various

systems of the body. The final stage is the most outward one, in that it is at this level of *spanda* where the insentient components of matter are put in motion.

The spilling over of bliss, in the form of the manifest universe, from the infinite ocean of Lord is the result of the inward and outward movement of what is called the particularized throb (*viśeṣa-spanda*).[23] The Supreme Lord, while enacting the drama of emanation of the universe, conceals his essential nature by so atomising himself as to be a limited existent, which, as it were, denotes the abandonment of absolute freedom. By assuming the role of a limited individual, the Lord thereby experiences all such limitations with regard to action and knowledge that are operative within space-time structure. In contrast to concealment, the Lord also engages in the drama of what may be called the game of revelation, which is basically characterised by the divine descent of grace (*śaktipāta*). The act of divine disclosure is actualised the moment the Lord bestows his loving grace upon the individual existent. As a result of the descent of grace, the finite individual being becomes so disposed as to turn towards the path of spirituality and in terms of which is cultivated such virtuous life as would result in the trudging of the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*), of yoga (*yoga-mārga*), and of devotion (*bhakti-mārga*). This disposition towards spirituality simultaneously terminates in the abandonment of such activities that are seen as impediment in the way of self-realisation. Thus there occurs the deepening of interiority and in terms of which consciousness, as it were, is saved from diffusion. Finally, the individual existent has the self-realisation of being identical with Paramaśiva, and as a result of this realisation the notion of limitation with regard to knowledge and action is given up. It is a realistion in terms of recognition that the individual self is non-different from the Supreme Self. In terms of self-discovery it means that each individual being is essentially Divine. The discovery or recognition of divinity within is in terms of self-bliss and is the result of the inward movement of *spanda,* whcih ultimately terminates in the attainment of the universal *spanda* (*sāmānya-spanda*). Thus the type of bliss that is experienced is technically called *jagadānanda,* viz., the universal bliss.[24]

Thus it would not be far-fetched to speak of *spanda* as being the embodiment of the unity of all divine powers. The bliss of *spanda* can be experienced by each one us within the crucible of everyday activity like the joy that accrues upon remembering what one may have forgotten or upon finding a lost but precious object, and so on.[25] As to what the experience of *spanda* is, is explained by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka*[26] thus:

> (The experience of *spanda* is such an) absorptive self-awareness of a yogi which, (while) shining in his heart, makes him to feel (as if) the entirety of phenomenal existence is being absorbed by his being. It is such a principle that is known in the scriptural treatises (*śāstra*-s) as the universal vibration (*sāmānya-spanda*). And (it is such a spiritual) activity that spills out of the Self. (Even though an activity), it is (to be considered as) the most subtle movement of the inert entity. (Since it is free from duality), so no (form of) duality shines in it. (As) the upsurge in the ocean of Consciousness, it is always replete with it (viz., with *spanda*).

The principle of *spanda* is so conceived as to be the impelling force behind every divine activity of Paramaśiva, particularly in relation to the manifestation of the universe. Thus in the *Spanda-kārikā*[27] the principle of *spanda*, in its universal (*sāmānya*) and particularized (*viśeṣa*) forms, is linked to the opening (*unmeṣa*) and closing (*nimeṣa*) of the eyes of God, which in turn corresponds respectively to emanation and dissolution of phenomena. Accordingly each one of us is told to discover that principle (*tattva*) within which is responsible in bringing sentiency to such objects, like the senses and the bodily limbs, that are basically insentient.[28] It is, thus, assumed *a priori* that the principle of *spanda* not only shines in the infinite and eternal consciousness, but also in such beings that are finite and temporal. The presence of *spanda* is experienced as and when an individual has such emotionally charged experiences as, for example, excitement, sorrow, bewilderment, etc. The amazing wonder that emerges upon experiencing the principle of *spanda* is explained thus:

> How is (it possible) for (such) a person to (fall into the trap of) miserable transmigratory existence who, (while having) observed

the mastery over this nature (viz., *spanda*), has been (experiencing) relaxation in the state of wonderful astonishment?[29]

Insofar as the attainment of such a state whereby the principle of *spanda* could be discovered is concerned, it is said that the aspirant, through vigilant self-awareness, would be so empowered as would lead him to the discovery of the effulgent entity called *spanda* in-between the rise and fall of ideas in the mind.[30] It is so because the endless series of ideas that rise in the mind owe their existence to the throb of pure consciousness itself. It would, thus, mean that it is the outward movement or stir of consciousness that is responsible in allowing ideas to follow each other endlessly. Likewise the resorption of ideas into consciousness occurs when there is inward movement. It is these two movements of *spanda,* outward and inward, that are constitutive of consciousness: the former representing the tendency towards manifestation, whereas the latter that of resorption. In the context of soteriology, the principle of *spanda* is said to be the source of both bondage and liberation. Insofar as man does not realise the *spanda-tattva,* to that extent he remains in the thralldom of bondage. However, *spanda* bestows divine powers and freedom the moment an individual aspirant recognizes its true and authentic essence. It is asserted that *spanda,* as it were, becomes the source of bondage the moment there occurs outward movement in consciousness, and as a result of which emerge from the universal *spanda,* the currents that are known as particularized (*viśeṣa*). The particularized currents appear in the form of attributes (*guṇa*-s), and thereby are responsible in concealing the essential nature of *spanda* from people in general. As a result of this concealment people are made to undergo the misery and pain of transmigration from one existence to another. However, the ones who know the real nature of *spanda,* are spared from the miserable wheel of becoming.[31]

The principle of *spanda* is so formulated and interpreted as to demarcate the essential nature of the Absolute, viz., of Paramaśiva. As such it is said to be the source of what we know as the phenomenal existence. It is the principle of *spanda* that is seen to be both the governing as well as sustaining power of the phenomenal

existence. The externalization of *spanda* results not only in the manifestation of phenomena, but also becomes the source of bondage to those who are destitute of supernal knowledge, which is to say who are devoid of the knowledge of the essence of *spanda*. However, it is this very *spanda* that becomes the source of liberation to those who have realized inwardly its essence. Thus *spanda* becomes the true and authentic means of self-realisation for such an aspirant who is desirous of liberation.

The Trika system of Śaivism, being non-dualist in orientation, is of the view that nothing exists apart from Śiva. It is Śiva that alone exists, and so, when looked at from the absolute standpoint, it would mean that both the sentient and non-sentient entities have to be treated as being nothing else than Śiva. Whether the movement is that of unfoldment (*vikāsa*) of the universe or its withdrawal (*saṃkoca*), both of them are but Śiva. This is a perspective that maintains that both liberation from bondage as well as well bondage itself are nothing but Śiva itself. Such an understanding of reality would, thus, maintain that non-dualism is as much identical with Śiva as is dualism. It all boils down to saying that nothing whatsoever exists apart from Śiva, and everything has to be seen as being non-different from Śiva. They who have attained the state of Śiva, know that every entity is nothing but Śiva itself.[32] It is because of this reason that this type of spirituality has been given the nomenclature of transcendent non-dualism (*parādvaita*).[33] It is so spoken because it looks both at knowledge and ignorance, liberation and bondage, as the expression of Śiva itself. It thus differs from the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, in that it does not treat the phenomenal world and the limited individuals in it as being the product of *avidyā*, and so unreal.[34] Instead of treating them unreal, the Trika is of the view that they are but Śiva itself (*śivātmaka*).[35] The beauty of Trika spirituality lies in the fact that it does not arrive at the realization of truth through the employment of the principle of negation, as is the case with Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. It is through affirmative transcendence that the Trika establishes the truth concerning the non-dual nature of reality.[36]

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5

The Trika Devotional Mysticism

THERE HAS ALWAYS EXISTED an inner tension within such forms of mysticism that are non-dualistic in orientation with regard to the question as to whether it is "love" (*bhakti*) or "knowledge"(*jñāna*) that should be given preeminence as an ultimate means of attaining identity with the Absolute. The theological trajectory that is purely theistic has no qualms in asserting that it is the way of love that alone should be viewed as an appropriate means of approaching God in terms of union. However, the theologians who consider or view reality as being non-dual are of the view that the way of love may be needed initially, but is required no more when it comes to the experience of identity. The most love can do is to lead an individual to the state of union, and whatever the contents of union may be, it always is characterised by duality. It is so because union is possible only within the frame of two existents, whereas identity occurs through such merger where one alone remains. It is this tussle between dualism and non-dualism that has remained by and large unresolved. The Trika, however, has overcome this theoretical fissure between love and knowledge by expounding such a doctrine of reality as to be both absolutistic and sufficiently theistic. The Absolute (Paramaśiva, Maheśvara) of the Trika is not so informal, abstract, indeterminate and passive as to be inert. It is an Absolute that is full of convivial vibrancy, and for this reason there is ample scope for the mysticism of love to flourish within the overall doctrinal framework of Trika. It were such outstanding thinkers as well as mystics as, for example, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa

of ninth century, Utpaladeva of tenth century and Lalleśvarī of fourteenth century, who gave the final expression, within the overall non-dualistic theism, to the Trika devotional mysticism.

The term "devotion" (*bhakti*) is so understood by the practitioners of the way of love as to mean supreme respect and adoration of God. It is an understanding that would maintain that devotion to God should be such as would be free from any kind of worldly attachment, which would, at the same time, mean that the emotion of love for God should be so cultivated as not to have scope for any other desire to emerge. Thus *bhakti*, according to this understanding, must not be treated as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. In such a scheme of thinking knowledge or action would hardly be given any kind of credit insofar as general frame of spirituality is concerned. Since this devotional love for God is of supreme nature, so for the devotee it would entail complete self-effacement in terms of which may be experienced the intensity of divine love. It is within this crucible that the Trika devotional mysticism needs to be evaluated.

The Trika devotional mysticism is so formulated by its practitioners as not to allow any kind of impediment to emerge insofar as its cultivation is concerned. Thus the devotional love for God is so conceived as to be free from religious or social restraints. The flow of love has to be free from impediments. What is really required of a mystic is to be possessed by such a spontaneous "flame of desire" as to be solely directed to God. The flame of desire within the heart of a true mystic burns in such manner as would look at the path of love the only means for attaining to the true state of union of identity with Paramaśiva. The first notable Trika mystic who gave vent to his unbounded love for Śiva was none else than the direct disciple of Vasugupta, namely, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (855–83). The lyrical composition in which he expressed his deep adoration and reverence for Śiva, is known as the *Stavacintāmaṇi*, or *The Wish-fulfilling Jewel of Praise.* It is a composition of hundred and twenty verses in which the loving union of identity of Śiva and Śakti is expressed as being nothing else than the unity of consciousness as light (*prakāśa*) and self-awareness (*vimarśa*).

The mystical torch of devotional mysticism that was lit by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa was further enhanced by the genius of Utpaladeva who lived at the end of the ninth century and the first-half of the tenth century. The theoretical formulation of Pratyabhijñā philosophy that his teacher, Somānanda, formulated in his most abstruse philosophical composition, namely, *Śivadṛṣṭi*, was so elaborated by Utpaladeva in his *Īśvarapratybhijñā* as to immortalise Trika forever. Utpaladeva was not only an original and outstanding metaphysician, but was a mystic of unfathomable depth. The poetical composition that he composed, namely, the *Śivastotrāvalī*, does not concern itself so much with abstract definitions of love, but, rather, engages itself in explaining spiritual experiences in such a manner as to be constituted by allusions. Since very little use is made of concepts or of images, so to understand the real significance of the mystical experiences that are narrated in this poetical composition is quite an arduous task. It is on account of such a nature that the translation of this composition of Utpaladeva is quite difficult.

The third great mystic who is responsible in popularising the Trika devotional mysticism among the common populace of Kashmir is none other than Lalleśvarī, also known as Lallā or Lallā Dĕd, of fourteenth century. She was married at an early age and had to endure every kind of hardship that was inflicted upon her either by the husband or by the mother-in-law. The pain and anguish of her married life became so intolerable that she, by renouncing worldly life, adorned herself with an ascetic mode of life. As a wandering mystic, she would, when in deep ecstatic mood, utter such verses as would directly penetrate the heart of each individual. Her four-line verses not only possess musical charm, but also contain wealth of information concerning the various kinds of experience that a mystic undergoes when engaged in the exploration of inwardness. All her mystical experiences are so couched as to draw the main inspiration from images that are constitutive of everyday life. Her verses are so natural and spontaneous outpouring as to be completely devoid of artificial poetical embellishments. The mystical quatrains are so composed as would engagingly describe Lallā's own mystical journey, and so may be seen as constituting a kind of personal

biography.

All the three mystics, namely, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, Utpaladeva and Lallā, resonate and reverberate with the experience of intimacy of divine presence in their personal lives. It becomes abundantly clear from their compositions that they are so resigned to the divine will as to have, through the asceticism of self-effacement, reduced themselves to the state of non-existence. Whatever they experienced seems to have been given the verbal shape, in the form of poetry, after coming out from the various states of mystical ecstasy. The verses these mystics composed are so original and authentic as to allow us to share their struggles, pain, madness, and even mystical wonder. It is divine servitude, and nothing else, which seems to be the goal of their spiritual life.

The God of Trika Devotionalism

It could be pointed out, at the very outset, as to how it is possible to speak of the devotional mysticism when Trika adheres to an absolutism in which there exists no possibility for a personal God to flourish. It is true that the Trika has formulated such a philosophical framework that is non-dualist in approach, orientation and content. However, the non-dualism of the Trika is not so impersonal and indeterminate as to have an Absolute that is inactive, formal and inert. It has conceived the Absolute so theistically as to be able to maintain proper equilibrium between the God of religion and the Absolute of philosophy. The Absolute is not so transcendent as to be unapproachable or totally "the other," but is also immanent, and this immanence is so characterised as to be constituted by the powers of will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*), which, as it were, are the essential signs or ingredients of absolute autonomy (*svātantrya*) of the Absolute. It is in the exercise of this autonomy in terms of the above powers that the Godhead of the Absolute is affirmed, which in theoretical terms denotes the affirmation of such absolutism that is essentially theistic. It is through the aspect of its Godhead that the Absolute, which is identical with consciousness or Self, manifests itself as the universe in the manner images are reflected in a mirror.[1] It means that the presence of God within

the universe constitutes the ground as well as reason for whatever exists phenomenally. Thus the idea of the Absolute as being Godhead has appropriately paved the way for the kind of devotional mysticism that has found its fullest expression through the lyrical compositions of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, Utpaladeva, and Lalleśvarī.

It is within this conceptual framework of the Absolute as being Godhead, and thereby the cause and ground of the universe that has so spiritually empowered the Trika devotee as to enable him to perceive the holy presence of Śiva in everything. It is the experience of this holy presence of the Lord within the continuum of space-time that so opens up the heart of the devotee as to make him offer worship to Śiva in terms of perceiving him as the embodiment of compassion and grace as well as the final refuge.[2] It is this experience of closeness, of intimacy, of presence that is expressed by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa thus:

> '(As) you are here, (so) I am holding you (tightly) in my fist (lest you may run away). (As) you are (present) here (in this universe), (so) I have seen you—where are you (now intending) to flee?' (It is) with such words as these that the fortunate one, nourished with the sentiment of devotion, rush to Śiva, the Lord weighted with matted locks.[3]

Utpaladeva also expresses this experience of close intimacy with God in such a manner as to have the essential realisation that God alone is the ultimate refuge and basis of every sentient being, nay of whatever exists, animate or inanimate. It is an experience in terms of which is explained the existential fact that apart from God nothing has the possibility to exist. As God is the source of everything, so his presence permeates the entire universe. It is in the vein of such an experience that Utpaladeva says:

> (Since) you are the Primal Being (*ādipuruṣa*), the unique one, the refuge of all beings,[4] (so) you are (inevitably) the Supreme Person constantly (ever) vigilant in a profoundly slumberous world.[5]

Once the devotee is enflamed by the flame of love, he rushes to Śiva with the intention of finding refuge in him. The renunciation of all worldly ties of the devotee parallels the ascetic character of Śiva himself. Thus the renunciatory asceticism of the devotee and the meditative asceticism of Śiva are made to co-exist in such a manner whereby disinterested love for Śiva streams forth from the heart of the devotee.

Śiva as the supreme ascetic is so depicted as to make him the embodiment of divine terror and in terms of which is affirmed his transcendence. He is so transcendent as to be totally other, which means that his infinity is so extensive as to be the cause of awe for the limited creatures of the world. It is this non-definable nature of God that so terrifies the limited creatures of the world as to depict him iconographically in such a manner as would give rise to fear. In biblical terms this fear exists in the minds of human of beings precisely because God being wrathful. Thus Śiva as God is shown as having his hair rolled up in a bun. While totally naked except the lion-cloth, made of tiger-skin, around his waist, he wears around his neck snakes as well as the garland of skulls which, when engaged in cosmic dance, move up and down in such a manner as if seized by inebriated madness and frenzy.[6] Such depiction of Śiva is meant to capture the symbolism of universal consciousness and in terms of which is explained such non-definable state (*bhairava-avasthā*) of the Absolute as being the source of life of individual existents. As non-definable, Śiva as God is so transcendent as to be awesome (*bhairava*). And it is this fearful awe of Śiva that is linked to the imagery of the universe as being a vast haunted cemetery. Having his abode in this cemetery that is the universe, Śiva accordingly is shown as drinking from a skull the intoxicating nectar that is permeated by the taste of the universe.[7] The ascetic aspect of Śiva also represents the spiritual fire of sacrifice and into which all forms of differentiation, whether conceptual or perceptual, are offered as oblations so that they are reduced to a heap of ashes.[8]

As an ascetic yogi, Śiva is shown as being so absorbed in mediation as to have transcended the human condition. As a typical yogi he wanders through arid deserts as well as makes his abode at such places that are either haunted or are solitary.

Such an imagery concerning Śiva is meant to delineate the idea that a true yogi not only overcomes the physical hurdles and limitations, but also becomes the master of himself as well as of the physical environment that surrounds him. Such a depiction of Śiva does not mean that the Trika votaries are agreeable to the idea that external forms of asceticism are a necessary prerequisite for spiritual ascension. They are totally opposed to such kind of asceticism that verges on bodily torture or abuse. Instead of trudging the path of external asceticism, a Trika yogi is asked to internalise asceticism in such a manner as to be able to trample over the bonds of impurities. A true yogi through his ascetic flame burns away the impurities that block the way to the heart. Thus the asceticism of a yogi transforms itself into authentic renunciation the moment every spiritual exertion is introverted, which means that such realisation completes the process of detachment from all forms of externality, which are either painful or pleasurable. This renunciatory detachment is not the outcome of external asceticism, but is the result of contemplation that is directed towards Śiva.

The Sense of Servitude

The yogi, thus, detaches himself, on the one hand, from the world and, on the other hand, attaches so heroically himself to Śiva as to remain in his constant and uninterrupted presence. As a consequence of this heroic attachment to Śiva the yogi completely forgets himself in the manner "the Creator-God," which is Śiva, forgets himself in his own contemplative forgetfulness.[9] Thus the ascetic-yogi, while offering himself as a gift in terms of mystical self-immolation, seeks nothing but the undifferentiated nectar of oneness with Śiva. In actual terms of praxis it means that the Trika yogi so offers himself as a victim into the fearsome and blazing fire of consciousness as would terminate in the devouring of gross and subtle forms of differentiation.[10] Thus the red-hot flames of consciousness not only purify the yogi by burning the impurities of differentiation, but make him such an automaton as would respond only to the stimulus of divine will. In this manner the yogi replaces his personal will with the will of Śiva, and accordingly it is Śiva alone

who controls the activities of his devotee. By subjugating himself completely to the will of Śiva, the ascetic-yogi attains the status of a slave of God. It is as a slave/servant of God that he realises his utter "nothingness," and as a result of this nothingness is fructified the knowledge that is given vent by Lallā in this manner:

> When I beheld Him, that He was near me
> I saw that all was He, and that I am nothing.[11]

The realisation of being a servant of God stems from the feeling of contingency, which explains that the individual being exists precisely because of God. Also it delineates the fact that an individual existent, in comparison to God, is nothing. It is so because God, being infinite and unlimited, is supreme, unconstrained and unbounded, whereas the individual existent, on account of his contingency, is both dependent and limited. It is this sense of awe concerning the infinity of God that led Pascal to say that he does not believe in the God of philosophers or of scientists, but in such God who has revealed himself through such prophets as, for example, Isaac and Abraham. Although this sense of servitude may initially seem to be enunciating the doctrine of duality, yet it is transcended when the mystic savours the uninterrupted nectar "whose taste is the undifferentiated union with you (viz., Śiva)." Thus Utpaladeva makes it quite clear that the very nectar that the ascetic-yogi or devotee tastes has flown forth as a result of mystical union. Had not this nectar of undifferentiated union been tasted by Utpaladeva, then he would "not be worthy of undergoing your (viz., of Śiva's) slavery here on earth even for a moment."[12] All these mystic outpourings clarify the point that the status of a servant of God is not attainable unless the idea of self is completely abandoned—and the abandonment of the self is possible only if it is burnt in the enflaming heat of asceticism. It is by becoming the servant of God that a true devotee finds his true glory and honour in terms of which he takes the cosmic pride of being dependent on Śiva. The devotee through the loss of the limited self ultimately attains the status of a universal servant, and Lallā expresses this idea thus:

He (viz., the ascetic-yogi) hath slain the thieves—
desires, lust, and pride
When he hath slain these highway robbers,
he hath thereby made himself the servant (of all).[13]

Such devotees are considered, according to this thinking, to be truly free who have become servants of Śiva in such a manner as to depend and subsist upon him alone. This dependent disposition upon Śiva deepens so much as to terminate in the freedom from such earthly supports as, for example, parents, friends, wife, children, etc., and to this feeling of contingency Utpaladeva gives the necessary expression in this manner: "Of what importance are others to me: parents, friends, and masters as well. For me you replace all."[14] There is no comparison between the slave of an earthly master and the slave of God due to the fact that the former has been "conquered," whereas the latter is a "conqueror." The conquered is so subjugated by his master as to deprive him of whatever earthly freedom he might have. And on account of the loss of freedom, people hold such a slave in scorn at large. In contrast to the contempt that people have for the slave of an earthly master, the slave of God, on the contrary, is held in high esteem, because, as Utpaladeva would have it, such a slave has "conquered the world," and so deserves to be "venerated by the universe."[15]

Asceticism—The Symbol of Renunciation

The slave of God is such a person who has, as it were, killed such enemies who are responsible in holding him in the thralldom of transmigration. Having conquered the inner enemies like lust, desire and pride, through the practice of ascetic renunciation, the devotee accordingly is endowed with such wisdom as would lead him to the realisation of complete absence of desire. Although Śiva may be the embodiment of supreme asceticism, yet as an ascetic he fulfils all the desires of his devotee. Thus the devotee of God is a person who possesses such supernal qualities as, for example, renunciation, wisdom and passionlessness. Each of these attributes, in their own way, help the devotee in reaching the final goal, which is total and complete knowledge of God.

It is not only the devotee who, through the ascetical heat, offers himself as an oblation. Śiva equally offers himself to us as a divine oblation when he engages himself in such acts of sacrifice that are driven by love. The divine nature of God is actualised when Śiva emits the universe out of himself, which means that the divine love-sacrifice is enacted at the macrocosmic level through the creative actualisation of the universe. However, this very divine love-sacrifice, at the microcosmic level, outpours in the form of "fall of grace" (*śaktipāta*). It is through grace that Śiva penetrates the heart of the devotee, and thereby is affected union between the two through the bond of love. Thus it is but natural for the devotee to follow the ascetic example of Śiva by offering himself as a gift.[16] As a consequence of this self-offering, the devotee accordingly becomes totally free from the dependence on yogic or religious practices.

Renunciation as a tool of asceticism is seen to be the only effective means of leading to the state of equilibrium. It is upon the attainment of the state of equilibrium that the spiritual adept remains indifferent to such opposites of life as, for example, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, love and hate. Thus it is such a renunciate devotee who alone is qualified to become the servant of God, and as the servant of God he succumbs no more to the opposites of life. Lallā graphically depicts the state of mind of such a renunciate-devotee thus:

> Let him utter a thousand abuses at me.
> But, if I be innately devoted to Śiva . . . disquiet will find no abode within my heart.[17]

The state of equilibrium as being indifferent to the opposites of life denotes that one should not cultivate self-love to the extent that one forgets the ultimate goal of life, which is to realise the state of loving union with God. We are accordingly asked to cultivate the needs of life to the measure they are necessary for its sustenance. In this context Lallā has this to say:

> Don but such apparel as will cause the cold to flee.
> Eat but so much food as will cause hunger to cease.

O Mind! Devote thyself to discernment of the Self and
of the Supreme,
And recognise the body as but food for forest crows.[18]

Renunciation as an antithesis of attachment is such a method of asceticism whereby the mind is so trained as to become immobile. It is not only the mind that is immobilised, but also the body. This immobilisation of mind-body is the fundamental goal of the meditative techniques of the yoga system that Patañjali has enunciated in his *Yogasūtra.* The immobility of body is gained by such external techniques as the bodily posture (*āsana*) and the regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*). Insofar as the arresting of mental whirls is concerned, it is achieved through such methods as concentration and meditation. Once the body-mind is immobilised, the yogi reaches a state whereby he becomes completely indifferent to mental operations as well as to physical needs. Thus the acme of renunciation is reached when indifference towards mental and physical operations becomes effective—and such a state is variously known as that of equipoise, non-attachment and contentment. While abiding in this state of indifference, the devotee however is seized only by one desire, which is that of union with Śiva. And Lallā expresses this desire for union with Śiva thus:

. . . the material world dried up within me
With the fire of love I parched my heart as a man parcheth grain,
And at that moment did I obtain Śiva.[19]

Upon obtaining union with Śiva, the devotee remains totally dead to all forms of externality, which means that he is no more conscious of his existence as an embodied being. The devotee is so inebriated by the nectar of union with God that he obtains complete freedom from dependence upon embodied existence. And accordingly we are informed:

. . . the soul that is free from desire will never die. If, while it is yet alive, it die, then that alone is the true knowledge.[20]

The Mystical Night

The experience of union with Śiva is not the end of the mystical journey precisely because of it being characterised by the sense of I-Thou relationship, which means that the dualistic way of thinking and of perceiving has not yet been totally overcome. The union that is experienced is between the individual and God, and so God would still be experienced as the "other." In order to overcome or transcend the otherness of God, the mystic has still further to travel the painful path of what is called "the mystical night." The mystical night is a path that terminates in the experience of the Ineffable Absolute (*bhairava*), and in terms of which is opened up the door for entering (*samāveśa*) into the ocean of bliss that is the Absolute. The experience of delight is so wonderful and amazing as to find no words for expressing its depth. The very entrance into the ocean of bliss denotes complete death to the natural man, which is equated with the undifferentiated state of Being. This ineffable Śiva as the Absolute is so equated with the mystical night (*śivarātri*) as to be identical with "the Light of all lights, Darkness of all darknesses!"[21] The ineffable and radiant light of Śiva is such as would devour, through penetration, every kind of duality.

It is in the stilliness and solitude of the mystical night that the soul, as it were, takes a plunge into the hidden life of the Self, and as the night progresses in the blazing glow of love, there correspondingly emerges, without clarity of intention, in the soul desire for such knowledge about which it knows nothing. Also the soul has no understanding as to how to have the knowledge of the non-definable Absolute. It is in the context of this urge that Utpaladeva says: "In a way I did not know that I had not known previously. As I acquired the nectar of your love, so I know now which I knew not before."[22] As a consequence of this, the inner agitation ceases to be. There spreads calm both inwardly and outwardly. The mystic accordingly plunges into Śiva, which is a process of interfusing of soul with Śiva. This interfusing is occasioned because the "lover adores you perpetually, Lord, in the state of the Night of Śiva when there is not the slightest sign of light, and when the entire universe is very drowsy."[23] Whether the devotee is asleep or awake, he knows that he will be awakened

to non-duality by the "yogic sleep" of love. It is on account of the fervour of the will that the thought in the mind remains asleep with regard to the world. As a result of this non-awareness of the world, the yogi-ascetic plunges into the repose of love that night entails. This "yogic sleep" does not only embody the non-awareness of the world, but also is seen as a means of stripping off the thought-constructs, and thereby allowing the soul to remain absorbed in the undifferentiated Absolute, which is Maheśvara, and which means the emergence of pure consciousness deviod of states. What it amounts to saying is that the heart must so empty itself as to be aware of nothing but of Śiva alone. It is this pure loving awareness of Śiva that is constitutive of authentic mystical asceticism.

In order to make the image of the "night" more meaningful, there is an another image that the Trika mystics have made use of, which is that of the "cavern." Like night, the cavern is bottomless, and so non-definable. It is an image in terms which the mystic desires to sink deep down into the bottomless ocean, which is Śiva. This cavern, though hidden and concealed, is cognised when the brilliance of the supreme Light causes destruction of the darkness of ignorance within and without. This is how Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa gives vent to this aspect of the mystical experience:

> O that we may see your interior cavern, enchanting and profound, in darkness dissipated on all side by the Brightness Supreme.[24]

As to why the image of "cavern" is made use of is because the mystic desires to explore the unexplored depths of being. It is so because it is in the darkness of the cavern of the heart where Śiva resides. Hidden and concealed, the blind men of ignorance, who have been blinded by the ignorance of duality, have no inclination to find out as to where Śiva resides. In contrast to the men of ignorance, the mystic perceives Śiva within the abysmal light through the mystical torch of unity. It is such a light as would consume ego that is offered as an oblation into the illuminating flames of sacrifice. It is only the "hero" (*vīra*) who has the courage and boldness of plunging into the cavern of the heart. He does so

for the purpose of purifying the heart from the residue of latencies (*vāsanā*-s), from thoughts as well as from memory. Upon purifying the heart from active and latent drives, the mystic is so empowered as to attain the naked will of the undifferentiated consciousness—and it is this consciousness that serves as the substratum of memory, intelligence and sensibility. Once the cavern of the heart is purified of its active and latent dispositions, or what may be called latent fluids (*saṃskāra*-s), there correspondingly emerges unbounded capacity in the form of energy that is unimpeded. This emergence of energy is actualised when the interior of the cavern is illumined by the divine splendour.[25] Accordingly the mystic has the experience of the cavern as manifesting itself as the very essence "of the cosmos."

The Night as the Symbol of Pain

It is, no doubt, through the mystical night that the mystic attains to perfect unity with Śiva. However, the attainment of this unity is not so easy as to be free from thorns and thistles. The progress of the mystic towards spiritual illumination is determined to what measure his love for Śiva has attained purity, which means to what extent the mystic has been able of burning in the furnace of love the latent and active residues in the mind. While the night could be sweet for the mystic who is blessed with the Beatific Vision, it could equally leave bitter taste in the mouth of those who only experience painful separation. There are some mystics who initially enjoy the sweet taste of the divine presence, but also experience such oppressive and painful moments when they feel deprived of this joy that was initially experienced. Utpaladeva has beautifuly expressed this come-and-go type of experience thus: "Even though the essence of your great Light is permanent and evident everywhere, Lord, why then did I venture into darkness."[26]

The darkness of the night, when looked at from the epistemic point of view, denotes ignorance. When ignorance is spoken of, it does not denote absence of knowledge. Ignorance within the Trika framework denotes imperfect knowledge (*apūrṇa-khyāti*), which means that it is knowledge that is basically erroneous concerning the nature of the Absolute. For the Trika mystic the erroneous knowledge is that that is characterised by dualistic

thinking and in terms of which is experienced an unbridgeable gap between the individual being and God. Ignorance, thus, would basically mean deprivation of such knowledge as is constitutive of undifferentiated unity. But darkness, when looked at from the perspective of feeling, symbolises bitterness of the heart. It is so because the density of darkness is such that one is deprived of the illuminative presence of the Lord. Or also it could mean such separation as is oppressive and painful. Thus for a mystic there is no greater pain than to experience separation from the Beloved. Accordingly pain for a mystic is separation, whereas joy is nothing but perfect union.[27] Thus the mystic, due to this separation, feels wounded in the heart. And the wounds of separation are inflicted upon the heart on account of the fact that the mystic seems to have lost the direction on the way to divine unity. Thus cries the mystic prayerfully:

> When will your essence, Lord, which reveals itself at the precise instant when one contemplates upon it, fill forever with the wave of its supreme ambrosia, the gaping wounds made by (my) ignorance of the true liberation.[28]

Such devotees who have experienced the ecstasy of love know the extent of pain that separation from the Beloved causes. Thus for such mystics the torment of the darkness of the night becomes the breeding-ground for meaning, because it is they who alone enjoy, suffer as well as "see the beauty of the universe." As the mystic advances in his spiritual quest, so does the extent of suffering become deeper and larger. Initially he is afflicted by his own imperfections, and as he progresses in the path of divine knowledge, he has to cross over many impediments that his own shortcomings may give rise to. Lallā, while making use of the metaphor of cotton-pod, describes this painful journey thus:

> I, Lallā, went forth in the hope of (blooming like) a cotton-flower.
> Many a kick did the cleaner and the carder give me.
> Gossamer made from me did the spinning woman lift
> from the wheel,
> And a hanging kick did I receive in the weaver's workroom.

When the washerman dashed on the washing-stone,
He rubbed me much with fuller's earth and soap.
When the tailor worked his scissors on me, piece by piece,
Then did I, Lallā, obtain the way of the Supreme.[29]

While the mystic struggles against the odds, he seems to be experiencing only failure. Every spiritual exertion or endeavour ends in such a failure as would lead to utter despair. The mystic experiences such an inward aridity as is found in a desert. As a result of this inner aridity, the mystic thinks that God does not reveal to him his luminous essence on account of subtle impurity that still exists within him.[30] It is a situation that Lallā describes graphically thus:

With a rope of untwisted thread am I towing a boat upon the ocean.
Where will my God hear? Will He carry even me ever?
Like water in goblets of unbaked clay, do I slowly waste away.
My soul is in a dizzy whirl. Fain would I reach my home.[31]

It is a situation in which the soul of the mystic does not know which way to turn. He is still, on the one hand, caught up with the pleasures of the senses and, on the other hand, desires to bridge the abyss of separation by igniting the torch of love within. Thus the mystic finds himself suspended in a supportless vacuum. As a result of this he silently suffers from his yearning for Śiva. He wants to remain permanently in the quietude of Śiva's sweet embrace. In the midst of this bewilderment, he discovers that love alone has the power and capacity to appease the frustrations that he is experiencing. He realises that he will find release from the pain of separation only if he seeks Śiva's help. Thus he has to awaken Śiva from within the secret cavern of his own heart. As a result of this the mystic ultimately finds out that his cry is heard when he attains the inner illumination:

Absorbed within Thyself, Thou remaindest hidden from me.
The livelong day I passed seeking for 'me' and 'Thee.'
When I beheld Thee in my Self,
I have to Thee and to my Self unrestrained rapture of (our union).[32]

The Conquest of Love

For the devotee of God it is the path love of that is given preference over the paths of knowledge and of yoga. Although both these paths aim at leading one to the soteriological goal of liberation, yet it is the path of love that somehow attracts the devotee. Thus the devotee always and constantly implores God for the fall of such loving grace as would cause the destruction of darkness, and thereby of transmigratory existence.[33] For the devotee mere knowledge does not seem to have the capacity of penetrating the dark cavern of ignorance unless it is transformed into the flame of love. It is such a flame of love that alone has the power of devouring the transmigratory existence by purifying the heart of its impurity. As the flames of fire purify gold from the accrued impurities, likewise does the loving flame destroy such impurities that are the cause of phenomenal becoming. Since the taste of love for the devotee is sweet, so the so-called gnostic illumination seems to him only a sour liquid.[34]

The role of love in the life of a devotee is such as would, upon its attainment, terminate in the stabilisation of the path of illumination. It is on account of love that both the dispositions of quietude and intensity are so activated in the devotee as would result in the initiation of such a movement that is necessary for the realisation of illumination. Thus Utpaladeva declares:

> Even your Essence may be inconceivable, (which means) beyond (the sphere) of contemplation, (yet) it discloses itself to such (devotees) who love you as soon they begin to contemplate.[35]

The above words of Utpaladeva make it clear that the devotee is immediately thrown, as it were, into the ocean of love the moment he begins to contemplate on Śiva. While bathing in the ocean of love, the heart of the mystic is seized by such light as would terminate in the realisation of peace and joy. While experiencing the intoxicating ecstasy and madness, he at the same time has the experience of drowsiness, of sleep and quietude. As a result of such experiences he remains completely oblivious of all that is external. It is at this stage of experience that the mystic is so immersed in God as to be participating in his life. "The one

who knows (as to) how to taste the ambrosia of love (as well as) how to bathe in it delights is the greatest of all bliss."[36]

To the measure the sensibility of the mystic is refined, to that measure love attains unadorned simplicity, which means that as he progressively immerses from one void into another, he accordingly abandons his will to the extent that he feels nothing, knows nothing, and loves nothing. Ultimately he reaches the Centre, which is the Self, where blazing flames of love consume all forms of duality by offering them as oblations to awful consciousness. Consequently, he experiences inner contentment in terms of the fulfilment of the heart, and so attains perfect harmony between the self and the universe. Upon the divinisation of faculties, he experiences the Self as being immense and unbounded and in terms of which he realises his perfect identity with the Absolute. Thus he attains such state where love, in its true majesty and glory, conquers everything. Thus the saint shares the bounty of love with everyone as a result of his being in the plenitude of grace.

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6

The Mystical Night of Śiva

AS TO WHY THE ŚAIVAS have considered the "night" to be the most appropriate symbol for appropriating the experience of the mystical union of identity (*mahā-milāpa*) with the Absolute in terms of what has commonly come to be known as the festival of Śivarātri has to be viewed in the context of the mystical experience of the Absolute as being ineffable. At the popular level of religiosity the night is conceived as being the occasion of mystical marriage of Śiva with his consort, namely, Pārvatī. But this occasion of celebration of mystical marriage during the night needs to be fathomed at a deeper level of reflection in conjunction with the symbolism of "light."

The symbolism of darkness delineates the idea as to what condition eventuates when the soul, as it were, is engulfed by the pain of self-alienation, which in existential terms expresses itself as a cry of *angst.* If put in Trika philosophical language, it would mean that the soul, being limited and conditioned, is a creature of contingency (*paśutva*), and so has lost the capacity of "recognising" (*pratyabhijñā*) himself as to who he essentially is, or, in other words, as to what constitutes one's essential nature (*svarūpa*). This conditioned existence of non-freedom or bondage comes to be on account of being veiled (*āvaraṇa*) by the impurities (*mala*-s) that cause ignorance (*avidyā*) to be. It is this condition of not knowing one's essential nature (*svarūpa*) as not being distinct from Paramaśiva that is what is constitutive of darkness—and the night as a symbol seems to be the most

appropriate for expressing this conditioned state of existence.

Although the night may be the symbol of darkness, and thereby of ignorance, yet it is the very solitude and stillness of the night that reflects the passionate yearning of love for the Beloved, and in our case it is Śiva. It is a yearning borne out of anguish, because the soul, as it were, experiences itself such abandonment as if left in a parched desert where the droplets of life-giving water do not seem to be in sight. It is in such forlorn condition that the soul yearns to meet his beloved, so that the festival of transcendental union of identity may be celebrated.

While journeying inwardly, the mystic, through contemplation, expects to encounter Śiva in such a manner as to be illumined by the Inner Light of gnosis. It is this Inner Light that so guides the sojourn as to disperse and dispel the darkness of nescience. This search for, as well as the encounter with, the Beloved is beautifully expressed by Lallā thus:

> I, Lallā, passed in through the door of the jasmine-garden of
> my soul.
> And there, O Joy! I saw Śiva seated united with Śakti.
> There became I absorbed in the lake of nectar.
> Now, what can (existence) do unto me?
> For, even though alive I shall be in it dead.[1]

> Slowly, slowly, did I stop my breath in the bellow-pipe (of my throat),
> Thereby did the lamp (of knowledge) blare up within me
> and then was my true nature revealed unto me.
> I winnowed forth abroad my Inner Light,
> So that, in the darkness itself, I could seize (the truth)
> and hold it tight.[2]

The silence of the night is also such a symbol of purgation whereby the *sādhaka*, through contemplative praxis (*yoga-sādhanā*), causes negation of such defects (*doṣa*) in the soul which, in the terminology of Trika, are given the nomenclature of impurities (*mala*-s). Thus it is through the mystical night that the

soul progressively journeys towards its goal, and the goal is nothing else than to realize union of identity with Paramaśiva. Thus the *mystical night of Śiva* is such a night in terms of which the *sādhaka*, through self-annihilation or self-effacement, offers himself as an oblation in the blazing fire of consciousness, which is nothing but Paramaśiva itself. This is how Lallā makes use of the symbolism of night as a kind of pre-requisite for self-annihilation. Utters she thus:

> The day will be extinguished, and the night will come;
> The surface of the earth will become extended to the heaven;
> On the day of new moon, the moon swallowed up
> the demon of eclipse.
> The illumination of the Self in the organ of thought
> is the true worship of Śiva.[3]

Thus Lallā uses the symbolism of "night" in such a manner as would empower her of doing away with every kind of differentiated consciousness of the day. It is through the destruction of the differentiation that there will be eventuated undifferentiated unity of sky and earth and it will come to be when the demon of ignorance is devoured upon the dawning of the new moon, which is but the symbol of supreme consciousness, namely, Paramaśiva. The dawning of the full moon is nothing but the emergence of the illumination at the end of the night in terms of the transfiguration of the so-called empirical consciousness. Thus in the silence of the night everything is appeased in terms of non-difference.

The silence of the night, being undifferentiated, is also linked to the "void" (*śūnya*). As and when the concept of "void" is made use of by the Trika thinkers it should not be construed that it carries the same meaning as it has in the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nāgārjuna. The concept of void in the Trika is explained in terms of unbounded space (*kha, vyoma*). As space is same (*sama*) and identical, so is the divine I-consciousness (*ahaṃ-vimarśa*), which is the nature of Paramaśiva. In the initial stages the mystic has the experience of the "void" in terms of nothingness, which

parallels the purification of the soul in terms of its ascension towards higher and purer forms of experience. The lower stages of existence, as it were, are characterized by impurities, and these impurities have to be burnt in the flames of the fire of asceticism (*tapas*). The void of space also expresses the ineffable nature of Śiva and the mystic, while ascending upwards, gives in to this ineffability of the Lord by plunging, through the mystical night of Śiva, into the plentitude of eternal bliss. This is how Lallā expresses this experience of ascension in terms of her submergence in the totality of undifferentiated supreme consciousness:

> There is there no word or (thought of) mind.
> There is there no non-transcendent or transcendent.
> Not by vow of silence, not by mystic attributes, is there entry there,
> Not there dwell Śiva and his Śakti.
> If there remaineth somewhat that is what the doctrine teacheth.[4]

Some of the terms that Lallā has made use of are so ambiguous as to verge on esotericism. The term "there" should be understood as indicating the supreme, and so is transcendent to what phenomenality embodies. The phrase "vow of silence" is such a means whereby the mind of the *sādhaka* has the possibility of acquiring such divine knowledge whereby union with Paramaśiva can be actualised. Likewise the term "somewhat" denotes the ineffable nature of the Absolute (*anuttara*) because of it being beyond any kind of conceptuality.

The darkness of the night also is the symbol of such secrecy whereby the mystic, through inviolable silence of the night, reaches the ultimate state of absorption, which is to say that everything is being devoured by the Void in such a manner as would remain nothing except the supreme. It is such a process of dissolution in terms of which all the categories (*tattvas*) are so dissolved as to lead to the experience of the Absolute in terms of an undifferentiated mass of consciousness. This is how Lallā expresses this aspect of the experience:

When the sun disappeared, then came the moonlight;
When the moon disappeared, then only mind remained;
When (absorbed in the infinite) mind disappeared, then naught anywhere was left;
Then whither did earth, ether, and sky go off (absorbed) together (in vacuity).[5]

While the night symbolises spiritual progression, through contemplation, towards the goal, which is union with Śiva, there eventuate such experiences which are either "sweet" or "bitter." For the one who has realized union with Śiva there ensues the "night of gaiety." Even though having enjoyed the sweetness of union, there occur moments of anguish in terms of which is experienced the absence of God. Utpaladeva gives expression to this experience of hide-and-seek, of presence and absence, in his *Śivastotrāvalī*[6] thus: "Even though Your presence of great Light is permanent and evident everywhere, Lord, why then did I venture into darkness?" That which is considered by the faculty of understanding as the darkness of ignorance is for the heart bitterness caused by the anguish of absence. Thus issues forth an anguished cry from Utpaladeva: "For those of us who take delight in you, there is no pain, neither in the beginning, nor in the middle, nor in the end. Nevertheless, Lord, it is pain which causes us to weaken! Explain to us, how can this be!"[7] As a consequence of this separation from the Lord, there is inflicted such a wound upon the heart the pain of which is unbearable. Therefore is sent prayer unto the Lord that He may "fill forever with the wave of its supreme nectar the gaping wounds (of the heart) that have been made by (my) ignorance of the true liberation."[8] And in what lies true liberation? For a devotee true liberation is characterized by non-separation from Śiva. It is the ardent devotee of the Lord alone who knows the meaning and significance of the pain that night symbolises, because it is they alone who "enjoy," and as a result it is "they alone (who) suffer . . . and alone see the beauty of the universe!"

While the night is considered as the embodiment of pain and darkness, yet it is in the night that the soul sets out on a journey

that is transcendent and in terms of which are offered in the fire of consciousness all that that is not-Śiva. It is Śiva as Bhairva who, as the all-devouring fire, consumes and annihilates all multiplicities through his transcendence. When in the fire of sacrifice ingredients are offered as oblations, it is thereby authenticated as to how diversity is consumed by Śiva and it is this aspect of Śiva that is called as the Terrible (*bhairava*). Thus says Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra*:[9]

> Sacrifice—the dissolution of all beings in the ardour of the fire of the supreme Lord's Consciousness, a fire possessed of a yearning to devour all beings in itself and uniquely subsistent on their dissolution—is (performed) to realise in its intensity the idea that all beings are in essence the ardour of the supreme Lord Himself.

When Paramaśiva devours diversity in its entirety, there remains nothing but the Lord Himself alone, unimpeded in His splendour, which means that, in the midst of darkness, there is neither day nor night, neither being nor non-being. Only Śiva remains and nothing else apart from Him.[10] In relation to the *sādhaka* it means that, while worshipping Śiva during *the mystical night of Śiva* (Śivarātri), he offers, at the level of differentiated consciousness, whatever he has as an oblation to be consumed by the ardour of fire. It also means that the worshipper of Śiva offers himself as an oblation by throwing himself into the ardour of ineffable consciousness so that nothing remains but the Essence alone. This self-offering unto Śiva is expressed by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa in his *Stavacintāmaṇi*[11] thus:

> Even while united with the differentiated. . . . You remain undifferentiated; we bring the offering to Your Reality, the only realisation of the ultimate Truth.

Confirming the fire-sacrifice as a means for devouring the dualized structure of diversity, Abhinavagupta, in his *Paramārthasāra*[12] speaks of fire-oblation thus:

When in the blazing flame of Consciousness he offers the pile of the great seed which consists in the manifoldness of outward and inward figments of thought, this is his (viz., of yogi's) fire-oblation, done with labour.

Thus *the mystical night of Śiva* offers the opportunity to the yogi of re-visiting himself in terms of the effectuation of inward purification through self-offering as an oblation into the "blazing flame of Consciousness." As a consequence of this there emerges such a state as would enable the yogi of offering every kind of "mental duality into the luminous and the blazing flame of Consciousness." As a result of this experience, the mystic accordingly becomes "one with Light."[13]

Thus the inward journey of the soul towards the Supreme Goal is hard and difficult to trudge. It is a path that is strewn with the thorns of duality, of impurity, of ignorance—and all of them are embodied by the darkness of the night. It is, however, also the night that offers the yogi an opportunity of plunging into the ineffable plenitude of the Self by offering himself as an oblation in the "blazing flame of Consciousness," and this self-offering as a means of achieving identity with the Supreme is afforded by what has come to be known as Śivarātri. At the end of this mystical journey is experienced the rapturous ecstasy of union of identity with Śiva, and this event is given vent by Lallā thus:

Absorbed within Thyself, Thou remaindest hidden from me.
The livelong day I passed seeking for 'me' and 'Thee.'
When I beheld Thee in my Self,
I have to Thee and to my Self the unrestrained rapture of
(our union).[14]

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7

The Trinitarian Principles of Trika

THE KIND OF ŚAIVISM that evolved in the valley of Kashmir has come to be known as the triadic (*trika*) Śaivism on account of its adherence to the three ontological princples, namely, the Lord (*pati*), the limited individual being (*paśu, nara*), and bondage (*pāśa*). It is within the hierarchy of these three principles that it has worked out other kinds of trinities also. While considering itself as the acme of spirituality, the Trika system of Śaivism, however, does not deny the validity of other spiritual paths or systems. It is within this conceptual framework that the Trika has recognised the six main spiritual paths as being valid, which is to say that they have the power of leading an aspirant to the desired spiritual goal. These spiritual paths, however, have been so formulated hierarchically as to point out their spiritual worth. At the lowest wrung is the way of the Vedas, which is followed by Śaivism, Left-hand Tantrism, Right-hand Tantrism, Kaulism and by the Tantric school of Mata. The last and the best among all these spiritual ways is said to be the Trika (*vedacchaivaṃ tato vāmaṃ tato dakṣaṃ tataḥ kulam, tato mataṃ tataścāpi trikaṃ sarvottamaṃ param*).

This open-minded approach of the Trika points out the fact that it is not such a spiritual system that is rigid, narrow and close-ended. It recognises the difference in the psychological make-up of each individual, which means that each individual would need to follow such a spiritual praxis that suits him the best. A man of sharp intellect has different requirements than the person who is less intelligent, and so it means that we will have to have different types of spiritual praxis that would fulfil

the requirements of every individual. This open-mindedness of the Trika validates the principle that truth has different layers of meaning. It is the level of understanding that determines our approach to truth. It is within the framework of this view of truth that the Trika has formulated hierarchically different ways to truth, and each way or path represents a particular level of understanding. Thus an aspirant for truth is asked to follow any of the ways that suits him the best. And this approach is confirmed by the *Mālinīvijaya-tantra* thus:

kiṃ tvetadatra deveśi niyamena vidhīyate;
tattve cetaḥ sthiraṃ kāryaṃ tacca yasya yathāstviti//

Since there are various approaches to truth, it means that the Trika Śaivism is one of them. Whatever truths are revealed in the Āgamic texts can equally be realised and known through other religious systems, such as, Kaula, Mata, Vāma, etc. As these various ways to reality have been recognised as being valid by the canonical texts called the Āgamas, it means that all these ways, including that of the Trika, constitute the corpus of what has come to be known as Kashmir Śaivism. However, it was the Trika, along with that of Kaula, which most of the leading Śaivas of Kashmir practised and furthered. The theoretical as well as the practical aspects of the Trika are contained in such canonical and non-canonical texts as the *Mālinīvijaya-tantra, Mālinīvijaya-vārttika, Svacchanda-tantra, Netra-tantra, Vijñāna-bhairava, Parā-triśikā, Śivasūtra, Spanda-kārikā, Tantrāloka, Tantrasāra,* and *Tantra-vaṭa-dhānika,* and so on. In these texts not only are formulated the Trika philosophy as well as theology, but are also explained such practical yogic methods that enable the practitioner to reach the soteric goal of freedom from bondage.

As already pointed out, the term *trika* means simply "trinity." As a system of trinities, the Trika has formulated various kinds of trinities with regard to its canon as well as with regard to its spiritual methods of praxis. It considers the *Mālinīvijaya-tantra,* the *Siddha-tantra,* and the *Namaka-tantra,* also known as the *Vamaka-tantra,* as the most important canonical texts, and so these three texts constitute of what may be called the canonical trinity

of the Trika. Insofar as the trinity of spiritual praxis is concerned, it consists of three methods, which are the Method of Śiva (*śāmbhavopāya*), the Method of Energy (*śāktopāya*) and the Individual Method (*āṇavopāya*). The Trika also has an ontological trinity, which consists of the Lord (*pati*), the limited individual being (*paśu*) and bondage (*pāśa*). It is because of such conceptual trinities that the Śaivism of Kashmir has come to be known as the Trika system.

The ontological trinity is based on the understanding that there is a transcendent principle that operates beyond the phenomenon, and this principle is called God (*pati*). Also there is the fact of the individual being existing in the world. It cannot be denied that the individual being experiences every kind of limitation, or should we say that this limited individual being experiences himself as being contingent and devoid of freedom (*paśu*). And this state of nonfreedom or of limitation is termed as bondage because of the fact that the ropes (*pāśa*) of contingency tie him to the phenomenal peg. This trinitarian view leads to a polarity in terms of which we have God on the one side and the individual being on the other side. This limited individual, however, is none other than God himself, which within the Trika system would mean that it is Śiva himself who has "become," for all practical purposes, the limited individual. This descent of the Divine to the human level should not be equated to the physical reduction nor should it be understood in terms of the doctrine of transformation (*pariṇāmavāda*). God as Śiva does not transform himself into an individual being in the manner milk is transformed into curd. Were God to transform himself into a phenomenal entity, as does milk transform itself into curd, then his unity would totally be destroyed, which would mean that he would be no more God. Since he is God absolutely, so his unity is never destroyed.

This descent of the Absolute (Paramaśiva) is interpreted by the Trika in terms of a play (*krīḍā*) or a show enacted by a magician. This movement of God towards self-externalisation results simultaneously in the obscuration (*pidhāna*) of his essential nature. Once this obscuration occurs with regard to the Godhead of God, there accordingly occurs the appearance of Śiva as the

objective universe as well as a limited individual being. At the philosophical level of thought this appearance of Śiva as the universe and the limited individual therein is equated to the reflection that is reflected in a mirror or in a clean pool of water. As to how this appearance of Śiva as the universe in the manner of reflection occurs is due to its Godhead, which is encapsulated by the concept of Śakti. At the anthropomorphic level of religiosity it is the Mother-Goddess that represents the Godhead of God, viz., of Śiva. It is, thus, the Divine Couple—Śiva–Śakti—that together gives rise to what is called the phenomenon.

It is on account of the Godhead or Śakti that Śiva appears as the universe or the limited being. Since Śiva has the power of obscuring his essential nature, so he is, on account of this power, always prone towards the external manifestation of himself, which also results in the concealment of his essential nature. Were Śiva to be destitute of this power of self-manifestation as the universe, he would then be no more God, because there would be none to affirm him as God. God not only conceals himself, but he also reveals himself to those individuals who seek him. It would mean that the very nature of God is constituted by such a double-movement in terms of which he, on the one hand, conceals his essential nature and, on the other hand, reveals his nature. This twofold movement is also applicable to the appearance (*unmeṣa*) and disappearance (*nimeṣa*) of the universe. The appearance of the universe (*vikāsa*) is linked to the contraction (*saṃkoca*) of the nature of God, whereas the dissolution (*saṃhāra*) of it is interpreted to signify the revealing aspect of God. These two movements constitute the basic nature of God, and so reflect his absolute freedom (*svātantrya*) with regard to the emergence and dissolution of the universe.

This dual activity of the Lord in terms of manifestation (*vikāsa, prasāra*) as well as dissolution (*saṃhāra, saṃkoca*) of phenomena is a play that is played both in terms of obscuration and revelation. This dyadic activity occurs because of the Godhead of the Lord, and the Godhead is nothing else but his innate Śakti. It is through Śakti through which the Lord manifests himself as the universe and it is also through Śakti that the embodied individual realises his divine essential nature in terms of the unity of Being. Thus

the entire cosmic drama from Śiva to the category of earth consists of the trinity of Śiva, Śakti, and Nara, which is to say that the thirty-six categories of existence (*tattva*-s) consist of God, his power, and the individual limited being. Among all the trinities that the Trika has postulated, this trinity of Śiva, Śakti, and Nara is the most important one on account of it encapsulating within itself the entirety of existence. A follower of the Trika spirituality has to begin his spiritual praxis within the frame of this trinity. It is because of this fact that this trinity has been spoken of as representing the Lower Trika (*aparam trikaṃ*), viz., the Trika for the beginners (see *Tantrāloka-viveka*, vol. 1, pp. 20–21).

This trinity of Śiva, Śakti, and Nara reveals the essence of the Trika philosophy. Firstly, we are told that the Absolute is not an impersonal and abstract Being who, like a passive spectator, is engaged in nothing, or rather abides simply in his own luminosity. Associating Śiva with Śakti, we are thereby told that the nature of the Absolute is dynamic (*vimarśamayī*), and it is because of this innate dynamic power (Śakti) that Śiva manifests himself as the universe. Since the universe is nothing but the manifest condition of Śiva, it would mean that the existents therein are not different from Śiva. This realisation of one's Śivahood comes to the individual through Śakti when engaged in the spiritual praxis that the Trika has prescribed. Since it is through the means of Śakti alone that the individual being has the possibility of realising his identity with the Absolute, so it is no wonder that the Śaiva philosophers have eulogised the Goddess Śakti extensively. In this regard this is what Abhinavagupta says in his *Parātriśikā-vivaraṇa* concerning Śakti:

nara-śakti-śivātmakam trikam hṛdaye ya vinidhaya bhāsayet;
praṇamāmi paramānuttaraṃ nija-bhāsam pratibhā-camatkṛtim//

The theoretical proposition that the individual existents are but essentially Śiva itself may sound to be true, but there remains the question as to how are we to affirm this truth. In order to affirm experientially this revelatory truth of identity, the Trika system has devised a trinity of contemplative methods by the practice of which a Śaiva aspirant is expected to have experiential

cognition of this truth. The truth of identity or of the unity of Being is affirmed the moment a Śaiva yogin has the experience of the trinity of divine powers, namely, the powers of will (*icchā-śakti*), knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*) and action (*kriyā-śakti*). The aspirant who reaches this stage of experience has arrived at the intermediary plane of the Trika (*parāparam trikam*) (cf. *Tantrāloka-viveka*, vol. 1, p.16). It is through these divine powers that Śiva reduces himself to the status of a limited being, which is to say that Śiva, through these three innate powers, descends downwards towards the phenomenal manifestation. It is also through these powers that Śiva as the limited individual ascends upwards towards the position of Śivahood. The downward as well as the upward movements of Śiva occur on account of Śakti.

The Absolute as Paramaśiva, at the transcendent level, is so conceived as to be devoid of objectivity and subjectivity. It is said to be of the nature of pure and limitless consciousness. As infinite and limitless, Paramaśiva as consciousness is not subject to any kind of limitation, particularly to the limitation of space-time. Since the very construct of the Absolute is infinite and limitless, so it means that it cannot be fathomed or known or described through the use of intellectual ideas or language. Even the word "consciousness" fails to describe and explain the exact nature of the Absolute. The word consciousness is used with regard to the Absolute for the purpose of eliminating the relativity of mental conceptions. The Absolute as it is in itself can be cognised only through intuitional experience (*pratibhā*), which comes about through the practice of the contemplative methods that the Trika has prescribed. At the level of intuition is realised that everything is Śiva, and nothing exists apart from it. At this level of experience a sinner is as much Śiva as is a saint, which means that the sense of difference, which is experienced at the empirical level, completely vanishes.

The Absolute is not simply consciousness (*saṃvid*), but is also cognitive reflection (*vimarśa*). The Absolute as consciousness (*saṃvid*) is said to be transcendent, but when considered in terms of divine powers of reflection (*vimarśa, śakti*), it is said to be immanent (*viśvamayī*). These two aspects of the Absolute should not be understood as if representing two opposite poles of reality.

These polar concepts are used for the purpose of gaining clear understanding as to the nature of the Absolute. Since the Absolute is characterised by unity, so it is but natural to explain it, at the level of thought, as a synthesis (*sāmarasya*) of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*. It is at the level of experiencing the Absolute as unity that the Trika system is referred to as being supreme (*param trikam*) (ibid., p. 7). Thus the Trika at the phenomenal level (*aparam*) takes into consideration the trinity of Nara, Śakti, and Śiva, and at the intermediary level (*parāpara*) it looks at the trinity of powers of will, knowledge and action, and at the transcendent level (*para*) it is the unity of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* that is fathomed. Thus a Śaiva yogin begins his ascension from the phenomenal level, passes through the intermediary level, and ultimately reaches the transcendent level where complete and perfect unity of Being is realised—and this is the trinity of spiritual levels of descent and ascent.

The Trika spiritual praxis gives much more importance to introversive absorption (*samāveśa*) than to the yogic enstasy (*samādhi*) of the *Yogasūtra*. The concept of *samāveśa* explains as to how the relative consciousness is merged into or absorbed by the absolute consciousness, which in theological terms, is termed as Paramaśiva. Such a contemplative method of absorption or submergence leads to the immediate realisation of the Absolute as being the very essence of one's own self. The Trika system has analysed the process of introversive absorption or of burying into three broad types, which are the *āṇava-samāveśa*, *śākta-samāveśa*, and the *śāmbhava-samāveśa*. This trilogy of absorptions is also constitutive of the Trika.

The Trika as a spiritual method of practice (*ācāra*) is given the highest position in the hierarchy of various ways that are supposed to lead to the ultimate religious goal, which is the experience of the submergence of the self into the Absolute. The nearest and proximate such religious ways or methods to the Trika are those of the Mata and the Kaula. Now the extinct Matācāra was based on the eight Āgamas known as the *matāṣṭakam*. All these Āgamic texts seem to have disappeared with the disappearance of the Matācāra itself. Insofar as the Kulācāra is concerned, Matsyendranātha of Assam seems to have been its

founder. Both these systems are tantric in orientation, and are theologically centred on the Mother-Goddess. The Kaulas, like the Left-hand *tāntrikas*, make ritual use of the five forbidden items, namely, of meat, fish, wine, fried beans, and sexual intercourse. It is believed that the ritual use of these items results in such experiences that are blissful as well as are helpful in the attainment of occult powers (*siddhi*-s). There is a tantric school, namely, the Sāmayācāra, who, unlike the Kaulas, do not make use of these forbidden items. Instead they make use of such substitutes as sweets, fruit, milk, etc. Insofar as the Trika itself is concerned, it neither favours nor disfavours the ritual use of such items. In the Trika the state of submergence (*samāveśa*) can be attained without the use of these items.

The Trika does not disfavour the use of such items because it believes that everything is Śiva. The concept of sin and virtue exists to the extent we see everything different from Śiva. Since the Divine permeates everything for a *tāntrika*, so the question of what is right and what is wrong does not arise. If these items are used with a disposition that perceives the presence of the Divine in them, then the realisation of one's Śivahood, according to the Trika, is hastened. The aspirant, following the Trika practice of submergence, may make use of these items if he feels them to be useful. He may equally abandon their use if he thinks that they are not useful insofar as his spiritual development is concerned.

In the descending order to the Trika, Mata and the Kaula is the Left-hand tantric school, viz., the Vāmācāra. It makes the ritual use of the forbidden items in excess. While the Kaulas make use of them within the ritual circle (*kula-cakra*) and away from the public gaze, the Vāmācārins make use of them openly and excessively. In contrast to the Vāmācārins, we have the Right-hand tantric school, Dakṣiṇācāra that does not make use of these items. The Right-hand *tāntrika*-s, instead, smear their bodies with the ashes of dead bodies or wear garland of skulls or practice various rituals in the cremation grounds.

These tantric practices are not meant for ordinary people. They are meant for those who have attained the state of a hero (*vīra*). For people of common disposition is meant the path of the Vedas, viz., Vedācāra. As to the worth of this path, it is at the

lowest wrung in the hierarchy of spiritual paths. However, the path of the Trika is not so restrictive as to exclude from its ambit people of common disposition. A person who is the practitioner of the Vedācāra can equally practice some yogic techniques of the Trika system. Such an aspirant, while being regular in the Trika yogic practices, ascends, step by step, the spiritual ladder till he reaches the supreme goal of liberation. Such a course of praxis terminates in liberation that is successive (*krameṇa*).

The Trika spiritual path is considered to be superior even to Kaulism on account of its approach to spiritual praxis. The Trika does not consider it binding on the practitioner to make use of the five prohibited items. A practitioner is given the freedom of choice. He is free to make or not to make use of them in his spiritual praxis. The Trika yogic practices are so oriented as to enable the practitioner to attain the highest goal of life, which is liberation, without depending upon the use of these items. Also it is not a *must* to engage in such ritual practices that are dependent on the use of *mantra*-s (mystic formulas) and *maṇḍala*-s (mystic diagrams) (see *Parātriśikā-vivaraṇa*, p. 251).

The Trika system of yoga has been so classified as to correspond to the three Methods of Liberation, which are *śāmbhavopāya*, *śāktopāya*, and *āṇavopāya*—and this trinity of methods constitutes its praxis. As to what is constitutive of these yogic techniques in relation to the Methods of Liberation has been extensively discussed in such primary texts as the *Śivasūtra*, *Spanda-kārikā*, *Parātriśikā*, *Mālinīvijaya-tantra*, *Mālinīvijaya-vārttika*, *Tantrasāra*, *Tantrāloka*, and *Tantra-vaṭadhāṇika*.

The *Śivasūtra*, while discussing the *śāmbhava-yoga*, speaks of the spiritual attainments that come to be on account of practices of the *śākta-yoga*, and *āṇava-yoga* as being the by-products of the *śāmbhava-yoga*. In the *Tantrāloka* is discussed in detail the yogic methods of each spiritual path. In the second and third chapters have been discussed at length the methods of both the *anopāya-yoga* as well as the *śāmbhavopāya-yoga*. The higher forms of yogic practices of these two methods have also been discussed in the fifth chapter. The next few chapters that follow it are devoted to the discussion of such meditative techniques in which objective entities are used as meditative supports. Also in a number of

chapters have been discussed the rituals with regard to initiation (*dīkṣā*). Also have been discussed the ritual use of *mantra*-s and of *maṇḍala*-s as aids to the deepening of meditation. The subtlest aspects of the Trika-yoga have been discussed in such texts as the *Parātriśikā*, *Mālinīvijaya-tantra*, and *Spanda-kārikā*. In the *Tantrasāra* and *Tantra-vaṭa-dhāṇika* the Trika-yoga has been discussed in outline, as both of them are digests—the former being the digest of the *Tantrāloka*, whereas the latter text being the digest of the *Tantrasāra*.

The yogic method of the *śāmbhavopāya* so devised as to result in direct realisation of the self as being of the nature of pure divine consciousness and bliss as well as possessing the divine powers of omnipotence and omniscience. It is a method in which no mental or physical exertion is involved, viz., no external or internal supports are made use of for gaining access to the interior absorption (*samāveśa*). So this method bypasses both the mental faculty as well as such physical exertions as the performance of rituals. It considers them as being of the nature of a veil, viz., they are rather seen as a means of concealing the real nature of the self. It is the habit of the mind to think about the objective elements in such a manner as to form definite images about them. And the name and form that the object is supposed to be possessing determines its image. This forming of image about the object results in the cognition of the object, which is accompanied by the word-image of the object. The word-image, when abstracted, transforms itself into an idea—and this entire process is technically called *adhyavasāya* in Indian philosophy.

Instead of revealing the object as it is in itself, what happens is that the entire process of cognition is connected to one's egoity, and accordingly is maintained that it is ego that knows or has the cognition. It is this process of knowing the knowledge that consists of thought-constructs (*vikalpa*), and so this knowledge accordingly is termed as knowledge that is based on thought-constructs. It is this kind of knowledge, in the form of concepts, that constantly continues to flow in the mind, and as a result of this, the real nature of consciousness remains concealed or buried under the debris of thought-constructs. Since the real nature of I-consciousness remains concealed due to the flow of thoughts in the

mind, so it, viz., I-consciousness, is accordingly reduced to the position of a limited individuality, which continues to revolve round the wheel of transmigration. The actions that this limited individual performs or the knowledge it gains is subject to the restrictions imposed by Nature. Thus the capacity of the limited individual with regard to action and knowledge is also limited.

The purpose of the yogic method of the *śāmbhavopāya* is to slow down the flow of ideas in the mind so as to attain the state in which complete cessation of ideas occurs. The mental faculties, upon the cessation of ideas, become as immobile as is the shining flame inside a lantern. The immobility of the mental faculties means that they completely withdraw from their objective activities by turning inward in such a manner as to disappear in the pure lustre of the subjectivity of the subject, viz., in consciousness. The practitioner has to be so vigilant as not to lose his attentiveness (*avadhāna*) in deep sleep (*suṣupti*). By maintaining vigilance over his attentiveness, the practitioner ultimately has the experience of the unity of Being, which is filled with the sweet taste of eternal bliss. As a result of this experience is attained the state of complete cessation from the cycle of transmigration.

There is another technique of the *śāmbhavopāya* that is centred on the Sanskrit alphabet known as the *mātṛkā*. Abhinavagupta has discussed extensively in his *Tantrāloka* the significance of the Sanskrit letters in the context of meditatively visualised absorption. As to why the Sanskrit letters are used as meditative aids can be understood only in relation to the Trika view of the phenomenal manifestation. The Trika Śaivism is of the view that the phenomenon is nothing but the external reflection of the powers of the Absolute, namely, Paramaśiva. It means that whatever is reflected outwardly is shining, prior to being reflected, within the effulgent lustre of I-consciousness, which is the Absolute. The practitioner of the *mātṛkā-yoga* is asked to make use of his will in such a manner as to attain the state that enables him to experience complete identity with the Absolute. As a result of this experience, the practitioner discovers that the outward phenomenon is but the reflection of his own divine powers which, prior to being reflected, was shining in the lustre of his own self. He meditatively visualises his divine powers as being identical with the sixteen sound-vowels

from *a* to *ḥ*. Also he comes to recognise that the categories of existence (*tattva*-s), from Earth to Śakti, are identical with the consonant sounds, viz., from *ka* to *kṣa*. As to how such meditative visualisation leads to the experience of identity with the Absolute is difficult to tell, because there is no account in any of the Trika texts to be found that would unveil this mystery. The *mātṛkā-yoga* is so difficult that it can't be taught verbally. It is only an experienced teacher who can unravel its intricacy as well as mystery.

Next to the *śāmbhavopāya* in the descending order is the Method of Energy (*śāktopāya*). As this method is oriented towards mental processes, so it makes use of such techniques that are totally mental. One of its methods is to repeat mentally such *mantra*-s that reflect the intrinsic nature of the Absolute as well as of the self. The Trika *a priori* assumes that the self of every existent is non-different from the Absolute, which is to say that the self of an individual is basically of divine nature. Such a conclusion is arrived at on the basis that views every phenomenon, from the tiniest molecule to the complex organism, as being the external manifestation of the Absolute. This external manifestation is carried out by the Absolute through its divine powers, which are concretised in its Godhead. And this display of divine powers constitutes the five cosmic activities of the Absolute, which are (a) the emergence of the entire phenomenon, (b) its preservation, and (c) its dissolution at the close of each aeon. The other two activities concern the (i) concealment of the divine nature of Absolute and the (ii) salvific grace that God sends upon his devotees.

The limited individual, although basically non-different from Śiva, thinks of himself as being limited in every respect. This sense of limitation arises on account of ignorance, and it is due to ignorance that he identifies himself with his body. Also it is because of ignorance that he sees himself different from every entity that is constitutive of the universe. This sense of limitation and of difference leaves its deep imprint upon the mind, and the imprint as impressions become so ingrained in every individual that it becomes difficult to uproot them even upon gaining the mental understanding concerning the nature of reality as being

undifferentiated. Also it should be kept in mind that ignorance within the Trika is not equated with the absence of knowledge. It is, rather, viewed as being of the nature of incomplete or imperfect knowledge (*apūrṇa-khyāti*). Ignorance as incomplete knowledge is constituted by such thought-constructs (*vikalpa*-s) that are eventuated by the subject-object difference. It is for this reason that ignorance per se has been equated with impure knowledge (*aśuddha-vidyā*). It is these impure thought-constructs that stand as obstructions (*bādha*) in the way of pure knowledge (*śuddha-vidyā*).

The first and foremost aim of the *śāktopāya* is to remove the obstructions that are caused by impure knowledge in the way of the arising of pure knowledge with regard to the nature of reality. It is believed that the constant mental repetition (*japa*) of the sacred formula (*mantra*) has the power of removing all such impediments in the way of pure knowledge that impure knowledge gives rise to. It is through the repetition of the sacred *mantra* that the ingrained impressions are so purified that there arise pure ideas or conceptions concerning the nature of reality. As a result of this the practitioner ultimately reaches his goal of supreme felicity in terms of which is experienced the mystical submergence (*samāveśa*) in the Absolute.

The lowest method, among the trinity of methods, is the Individual Method (*āṇavopāya*). This method, in comparison to the above two methods, is of inferior quality. This method is meant for such individuals who are incapable of practising the superior yogic methods. This method in many ways resembles the concentrative method of Patañjali. It is a method in which attention is fixed upon an external object, considering the object as the manifest form of the Divine. The objects of meditation are either of superior quality or of inferior quality. The nearest objective phenomenon to one's self is the faculty of understanding. Next to it that is nearer to the self is the principle of animation in the form of exhalation and inhalation. Next to animation that is nearer to the self is one's body along with its nerve centres. All these aspects that are constitutive of one's physical and mental existence are used as supports for meditation. Meditation on these aspects of self are respectively known as (a)

the *dhyāna-yoga* or *buddhi-yoga,* (b) *uccāra-yoga,* (c) *karaṇa-yoga,* and (d) *dhvani-yoga.* The *karaṇa-yoga* as *kuṇḍalinī-yoga* and *dhvani-yoga* as *nāda-yoga* has percolated to such denominations that, in one way or the other, have been influenced by Tantrism. Insofar as the *uccāra-yoga* and *dhyāna-yoga* are concerned, they have remained within the ambit of the Trika.

Insofar as the practice of *uccāra-yoga* is concerned, it mainly consists of holding the mind at rest on *prāṇa.* In contrast to the *uccāra-yoga,* we have the *dhyāna-yoga* which, like the *dhyāna* of the *Yogasūtra,* is characterised by such meditative practice in which foundational light of I-consciousness is so meditated upon as to lead to the experience of its pervasion among all the categories of existence (*tattva*-s). In this manner is experienced the uninterrupted awareness of the light of consciousness permeating the entire phenomenon from Śakti to Earth.

The practice of *karaṇa-yoga* in the *āṇavopāya* is basically directed towards the body. In this yogic practice it is the body that is made the object of meditation. While meditating upon the body, the meditator thinks of the body as being the replica of the entire macrocosm. Upon deepening the experience of identity of the microcosm (body) and the macrocosm (universe), the aspirant is so elevated spiritually that he begins to glorify the divine presence within the universe. Finally, he arrives at the experience whereby he recognises that whatever divine glory he found in the universe is basically the glory of the Self. When we speak of the body as an object of meditation, it should be understood as meaning the physical body, the subtle body and also the causal body.

The practice of *dhvani-yoga* is basically such a form of meditation which concerns itself with sound. This form of yoga is also known as the *varṇa-yoga* or *nāda-yoga.* The meditation of this yoga is so conducted as to lead to the unification of all sounds (*nāda*). It is believed that the *prāṇa* that is inside the body contains within itself the silent sound or what is called the unstruck sound (*anāhata-nāda*). This silent sound is considered as being the creative seed of the phenomenal manifestation and dissolution (*sṛṣṭi-saṃhāra-bīja*). The aim of this yogic practice is to reach the inner sound, which is considered as being eternal and the source

of what is called phenomenon.

The lowest meditative technique of the *āṇava-yoga* is known as the *sthāna-kalpanā*. It is a meditative method in which is mentally repeated or recollected the essential knowledge concerning space and time. Each one of them is respectively contemplated in three respects, and collectively it is known as the *ṣaḍadhva-yoga*, which is to say that contemplation is conducted in a manner that involves six objective elements. Also it is a method of concentration in which the different stations or places of the body are meditated upon. The main meditative centres of the body that are meditated upon are (a) the *trikoṇa* or the *mūlādhāra*, viz., the place below the sexual organ, (b) the navel, (c) the heart, (d) the throat, and (e) the central place between the two eyebrows. This kind of meditation, in a limited sense, is called *dhāraṇā* in the *Yogasūtra*.

To conclude we must keep in mind that the kind of yoga the Trika has developed is not aimed at suppressing the mind or the senses by imposing such restrictions that are ascetical or tortuous in nature. It believes that by suppressing the senses or the mind there are bound to occur such adverse reactions that could be harmful to one's wellbeing. Instead of suppression, the approach of the Trika towards the senses and the mind is in terms of sublimation. If the mind or the senses were put forcibly on an unwanted trajectory, it would mean of facing such an uncharted and dangerous course that would be like passing through a dense forest of steep slopes, of dangerous animals and snakes. The mind or the senses would withdraw from their natural functions only when they are offered the spiritual delight of the Self—and such an experience is possible if the Trika yoga is followed diligently. So let the mind and the senses not be suppressed, but be offered the taste of the bliss of the Self. This is what Abhinavagupta has to say in this regard:

svam pathānam hayasyeva manso ye nirundhate;
teṣām tat-khaṇḍanā-yogad dhāvatyutpatha-koṭibhiḥ/
anādaraviraktyaiva galantīndriya-vṛttayaḥ;
yāvattu viniyamyante tāvattavad vikurvate//

8

The Trika Concept of Kālī

Kālī as the embodiment of the Mother-Goddess is purely tantric in origin. Tantrism uses the idea of the Goddess in such a manner as would become the best vehicle for explaining and describing the nature of the Ultimate. The notion of the Ultimate for a *tāntrika* is not that of impersonal Absolute, but of an Absolute that contains within itself absolute powers through which the cosmic activities of creation, preservation, dissolution, concealment and revelation are carried out. It is the Goddess that represents the powers of the Absolute. The Absolute (Paramaśiva) and the Goddess (Kālī) are so unified in the absolute union (*mahā-melāpa*) of unity (*abheda*) that one without the other cannot be conceived. At the transcendent level, the Ultimate is not to be thought of either in terms of Śiva or in terms of Śakti; it is beyond both. It is at the human level of thought that we speak of the Ultimate in terms Śiva and its Śakti, and Śakti being none else than Kālī.

This tantric concept of Śakti as Kālī was, for the first, popularised in the valley of Kashmir by Śivānandanātha (eighth century AD). Śivānandanātha interpreted anew the tantric concept of divine power in terms of what has come to be known as the Path of Kālī or Kālīnaya as well as Kramanaya or the Path of Succession. It is said that Śivānanda was the head of a tantric subcentre (*upapīṭhadeśa*) known as the Uttarapīṭha. There came into being, with the spread of Tantrism, four main tantric centres at such places as Kāmākhya-pīṭha in Assam, Pūrṇagiri-pīṭha in Andhra, Jālandhara-pīṭha at Kāṅgrā, and Oriyana-pīṭha at

Jagannāthapurī. In addition to these four main centres, there also arose a number of sub-centres throughout the Indian sub-continent, and one such sub-centre also existed in Kashmir by the name of Medhapīṭha. Most probably it is this Medhapīṭha that is identical with Uttarapīṭha, and of which Śivānandanātha was the head.

The esoteric lore as well as praxis of the Kālīnaya or Kramanaya was imparted by Śivānandanātha to his three main female disciples called Yoginī-s, and they are Keyūravatī, Madaṇikā, and Kalyāṇikā. Whatever esoteric knowledge these three received from their teacher was imparted by them to Govindarāja, Cakrabhānu (also known as Bhānuka), and Erakanātha. It is from Govindarāja from whom Somānanda, the founding father of the Pratyabhijñā philosophy, received necessary instructions in the esotericism of the Kālīnaya. It is this preceptorial tradition that ultimately reached Jayaratha (twelfth century AD), the famous commentator of the *Tantrāloka.* The other preceptorial line that issued from Cakrabhānu reached Abhinavagupta (tenth–eleventh centuries AD) through Ujjaṭa and Udbhaṭa. No preceptorial line, however, came down from Erakanātha, because he did not impart the knowledge of the Kālīnaya to anyone.

This interpretive system of Tantrism is given the appellation of Kālīnaya on account of the fact that within it the practitioner (*sādhaka*) is asked to visualise the powers of his own consciousness, in the form of twelve "kālī-s," as engaged both in absorption and emanation of phenomena at the levels of the knowing subject (*pramātṛ*), the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*), and the object of knowledge (*prameya*). This meditative visualisation has to be conducted in such a manner as to let the practitioner feel as if he himself is the Lord containing within himself the entirety of phenomena. The process of visualisation is centred on the twelve aspects of Kālī, which is to be carried out in the regular order of succession, viz., one aspect of Kālī following the other. On account of this meditative succession the system also came to be known as the Kramanaya, the Path of Succession.

Most of the literature of this system has, due the ravages of time and history, disappeared. Whatever is available, is in the form of long quotations from other works, particularly from the

Tantrāloka of Abhinavagupta as well as from the commentary of Jayaratha on the *Tantrāloka*. The famous texts that this system produced are the now lost *Kramasadbhāva*, *Kramasūtra* and the *Kramastotra* of Siddhanātha alias Śambhūnātha. Abhinavagupta wrote a detailed commentary, called *Kramakelī*, on the *Kramastotra*. Unfortunately both these works are no more extent. Fortunately fourteen verses of the *Kramastotra* and few passages from *Kramakelī* have been preserved by Jayaratha by quoting them in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka*. Abhinavagupta also wrote a hymn by the name of *Kramastotra*, which, however, has no commentary.

The Trika concept of *kālī* would have to be evaluated in the context of its philosophical view concerning the nature of reality. The Trika system of thought, although idealistic, is not so idealistic as to subscribe to the view that the external world is nothing but the projection of the mind or a mere construction of imagination (*kalpanā*). The Trika firmly believes in the actual reality of the world. It considers the world as an emission (*visarga*) of the Lord (*īśāna*) itself, which, when given a realistic tinge, would mean that the emission that has occurred is actual and not the working of imagination. Thus the Trika does not follow in the footsteps either of Western idealism or of Buddhist Vijñānavāda.

The Absolute for the Trika is of the nature of consciousness. As consciousness, the Absolute is not simply light (*prakāśa*), but also is endowed with the power of self-reflection (*vimarśa*), and this reflective aspect is equated with activity (*kriyā*). Such a conception would mean that the Absolute is of the nature of self-reflective consciousness (*prakāśa-vimarśa-mayī*). Being of the nature of self-cognitive light, the Absolute thereby always vibrates (*spandanam*) with activity, which means that the Absolute of the Trika is not a mere impersonal Being, but as Godhead is endowed with absolute powers. It is the Godhead aspect of the Absolute that in the Trika is represented by the concept of *kālī*.

The process through which the emission or manifestation of the phenomenon occurs in the Absolute, also called Paramaśiva, is known as *kalanā*. This manifestational process or *kalanā* of the phenomenon that the Absolute as Godhead accomplishes is encapsulated by the concept of *kālī*. The Trika concept of *kālī* is

not anthropomorphic, but represents an effort at explaining as to how God accomplishes the task of throwing out of itself what is within. Whatever processes of manifestation (*kalanā*) God may accomplish, it is done through the power known as Kālī. Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka* (4.73) has described as to how the process of manifestation (*kalanā*) occurs through five stages, and they are known as *kṣepa, jñānam, saṅkhyānam, gatiḥ,* and *nāda.*

(i) Whatever exists in the manifest universe, including the universe itself, exists, prior to manifestation, as pure potency within the divine I-consciousness, which is to say that there is absolute identity between the Absolute and the manifest categories prior to their emission. Whatever exists potentially in divine I-consciousness has the possibility of being actualised as the manifest categories. This possibility of manifestation for the potential exists on account of the innate power of freedom (*svātantrya-śakti*) of the Absolute as Paramaśiva. It is this power of freedom, exercised through will (*icchā*), of the Absolute that is actively engaged in the external manifestation in the form of categories of existence (*tattva*-s). Thus it is the very nature of the Absolute as consciousness to be inclined towards manifesting itself as phenomenon. This entire process of manifestation of the Absolute is spoken of as being playful or sportive. This tendency or inclination of the I-consciousness towards externalisation as the objective universe is known as emission. It is an emission that may be equated to a vomit (*vamana*). Prior to this externalisation of what exists as *potentia* in I-consciousness, exists as pure "I" (*ahaṃ*). Once the externalisation of consciousness, in the form of objectivity, is accomplished, we have "this-ness" (*idantā*). It is this process of making a manifest thing to appear different from I-consciousness or self that is called *kṣepa: svātmano bhedanaṃ kṣepaḥ* (*Tantrāloka,* 4.174).

(ii) At the second stage of manifestation occurs an indeterminate cognition in terms of what may be called the "differentiated this-ness." The differentiated this-ness is not such as to be existing objectively out there either at the level of idea or determinate perception. Instead cognition of the so-called objectivity shines in the psychic light of I-ness so ambiguously as not to have any kind of form (*rūpa*) or linguistic designation

(*nāma*). It is such an inward cognition that is completely devoid of mentation as well as of word-image. It is this indeterminate and nebulous cognition (*nirvikalpa-saṃvedana*) that is here spoken of as "knowledge" (*jñānam*), which is constitutive of the second step of manifestation of objectivity. It is termed as "knowledge" because the function of knowledge is to know a differentiated object through cognition (*bheditasyāvikalpanaṃ jñānam*, ibid., 4.174). Since indeterminate cognition is not accompanied either by an idea or by a word-image, so in the system of Nyāya it is not considered as a valid means of knowledge (*pramā*).

(iii) The third step of the Absolute towards external manifestation is characterised by such cognitive knowledge that expresses itself through some definite idea as well as word-image. The knowledge that persists at this stage consists of idea as well as of word-image. It is knowledge that is mainly derived from what we may call name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*), and such knowledge has been termed as *saṅkhyānaṃ* in relation to the pentadic process of manifestation (*kalanā*). This determinate knowledge as *saṅkhyānam* denotes knowledge that makes things explicitly known (*samyak khyānaṃ*). As determinate knowledge, it is characterised by such forms of differentiation in terms of which one object is cognised to be different from other similar objects (ibid., 4.174: *vikalpaḥ saṅkhyānam'anyato vyatibhedanāt*). What it amounts to saying is that the determinate cognition always arises through the method of contrast and exclusion (*apohana*), which is to say that, when an object is differentiated from other similar or non-similar objects, there occurs cognition of the object. Let us illustrate the point by resorting to the example of chair-knowledge. The knowledge of the chair arises when other objects, which are non-chair objects, are excluded from our cognition. Also is chair-knowledge given rise to when the characteristics of the chair are compared with the characteristics of other objects. We know this is chair because it is different from the table. It is this knowledge through exclusion and comparison that produces knowledge in terms of ideation that is accompanied by the word-image.

(iv) At the fourth level of manifestation (*kalanā*) occurs know-

ledge in terms of a knower, viz., there is a definite subject who obtains knowledge through reflection. As a result of reflection, the knowing subject either says that I know this object or this object is known to me. Such a state of knowledge is known as being objective (*pramā*) on account of it having arisen through determinate (*savikalpa*) cognition and through proper ratiocination. The arising of such determinate knowledge is termed in the Trika as *gati*, viz., knowledge (*gatir jñānam*). In short, the knowledge that is *gati* arises when the reflective ratiocination of the I-consciousness of the knowing subject is transformed into an objective idea (ibid., 4.175: *gatiḥ svarūparohitvam pratibimba-vadeva yat*).

(v) The fifth step of *kalanā* is characterised by such self-satisfaction in terms of which the determinate cognition of the object is so assimilated into one's subjectivity as to result in the effulgence of pure "I" (*ahaṃ*). Such an experience is technically called *nāda*, which, when translated within the Trika system, denotes simply awareness. It is a kind of residual self-awareness (*nāda*) that assimilates into itself what we call objective manifestation (ibid., 4.175: *nādaḥ svātma-parāmarśa-śeṣatā tad-vilopanāt*).

The Trika sees these five processes of manifestation (*kalanā*) as representing the innate cosmic activities as well as powers of the Lord. The first cosmic activity of the Lord is that of giving rise to the objective phenomena (*sṛṣṭi*), and it is *kṣepa* that embodies this creative activity of the Lord. The second cosmic activity of the Lord is directed towards the preservation (*sthiti*) of what has been vomited (*vamana*) or emitted (*visarga*) and this activity is encapsulated by *jñānam*. The third cosmic activity of the Lord is characterised by withdrawal (*saṃhāra*) of the phenomena that he has emitted from within. This emission of the phenomena from within the Absolute is similar to the sprouting of the plant from the seed. The process of *gati* represents the dissolution of the cosmic activity of the Lord. The surging towards the external manifestation, when actualised, results in the concealment (*pidhāna*) of the Lord. It is so because the Lord as the limited individual existent is unable to realise his essential divine nature. And the process of *saṅkhyānam* represents

this cosmic activity of obscuration of the Lord. The fifth cosmic activity of the Lord is that of revelation or grace (*anugraha*). It is an activity in terms of which the limited individual existent recognises his essential unity with the Absolute. It is the *nāda* process of *kalanā* that embodies the revelatory activity of the Lord.

The concept of *kālī* is so interpreted as to look at the Absolute more in terms of energy than consciousness. As a system of interpretation of reality, it is known as Kālīnaya, viz., the Path of Kālī. As a method of salvation, it is, within the over-all frame of the Trika, equated with the Method of Energy (*śāktopāya*). The Method of Energy consists of such contemplative practices that are purely mental. One such practice is characterised by an inarticulate mental repetition of knowledge (*svakalpa-jñāna*) concerning the essential nature of reality. Also meditation is conducted on the twelve aspects of Kālī that reveal the basic nature of every existent. The five processes of manifestation (*kalanā*) of the Lord, as mentioned above, are such processes that are constantly being played within the individual existent.

The concept of *kālī* is so conceived as to reveal the divine power of the Lord in terms of the fivefold cosmic activity from creation to dissolution, and from obscuration to revelation. Also the idea of *kālī* is seen to embody such divine powers, at the transcendental level, of the Absolute that shine within it as potentiality. Kālī as the divine power of the Absolute has been viewed mainly in terms of twelve aspects. Prior to the manifestation of the phenomenal diversity, *kālī* as divine energy exists as pure unity at the level of Śakti. When there is the appearance of unity in diversity of *kālī*, it occurs at the stage of Vidyā. The manifestation of complete diversity of divine energy occurs at the level of Māyā. The manifestation of divine energy (*kālī*) as phenomenal diversity would not have occurred at the levels of Vidyā and Māyā had it not, at the transcendental level of the Absolute, existed in the state of unity.

The Goddess Kālī as divine energy is also viewed from four perspectives, which are those of Parādevī, Parāparādevī, Aparādevī and Kālakarṣiṇidevī. The first three aspects of Kālī represent the absolute unity, unity in diversity and complete

diversity, whereas the fourth aspect represents the all-pervasive and the absolute power of the Goddess. At all these four levels the cosmic activities of manifestation, preservation and dissolution of the Absolute are carried out in and through what is known as divine stir (*spanda*), and which at the anthropomorphic level is represented by the Goddess. This divine stir shines at the Parādevī level in terms of perfect unity. There is no bifurcation within supreme consciousness in terms "I" (*ahaṃ*) and "this" (*idaṃ*), viz., between the subject and object, between transcendence and immanence. It is at the level of Parāparādevī that there occurs bifurcation within supreme consciousness in terms of the subject and the object. The bifurcation, however, is not absolute. It is a bifurcation that may be linked to the reflection of a city appearing in a mirror, which is both different and non-different from the reflected reflection. The complete diversity that eventuates at the Aparādevī level may be compared to the house and the various articles in the house, and the distinction is so far reaching as to have nothing in common between the house and the articles that are in the house.

Prior to the phenomenal manifestation, the manifest categories exist in complete union, though potentially, with the Absolute. This unity is of the same kind that occurs between the seed and the plant prior to the sprouting of the plant. When applied to the Absolute, this unity between the Absolute and the phenomenon occurs at the transcendent level. Thus Kālī as Goddess, at the transcendent level, is seen to be containing in the seed-form every kind of phenomenon within itself. While containing at this level everything potentially within itself, the Goddess also remains engaged in divine activity. The Goddess Kālī accordingly shines at this level in the unitary form as *parādevī*. The Goddess, at the *parāparā* level, is so inclined towards phenomenal manifestation as to result in a diversity that is not complete. The tendency towards diversity is simply existing at the level of ideation in terms of "this," and that is why it is spoken of as representing unity in diversity. It is at the *aparā* level that the Goddess gives rise to the manifest order of diversity. It is as Kālakarṣiṇi that the Goddess conducts all these activities. As Kālakarṣiṇi, the Goddess attracts towards itself everything, which results in the absorption or

dissolution of time (*kāla*). It is time as succession of events (*krama*) that is what is dissolved or is devoured by the Goddess. Thus Goddess as Kālī is such a nomenclature that indicates how the succession of events and actions constitute time. Since the Goddess as Kālī, at the transcendental level, devours time as succession, so this aspect of the Goddess is termed as Kālakarṣiṇi.

The practitioner of the Path of Kālī (*kālīnaya*), when engaged in meditation, is asked to visualise within his own consciousness the pentadic manifestational process (*kalanā*) in relation to the knowing subject (*pramātṛ*), the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*), the object that is to be known (*prameya*) and the correct knowing (*pramā*). The practitioner has so to visualise these cosmic activities as if he himself is conducting them. By repeating this practice regularly, the practitioner thereby discovers within himself that he is essentially identical with the Absolute. Whatever sense of difference is experienced at the empirical level, is because of ignorance, and due to which one's essential nature (*svarūpa*) is forgotten. When recognition dawns upon the practitioner in terms of his I-consciousness being non-different from Kālī, the Godhead of the Absolute, then the play of the fivefold process of manifestation (*kalanā*), which the Goddess carries out through her twelve aspects, is grasped in its entirety. This recognitive insight comes to the practitioner when he visualises as to how he is engulfed and embraced, one by one, by the phenomena of twelve varieties around him and how, with the help of twelve Kālīs, the diversity of phenomenon is devoured in terms of absorption by one's I-consciousness. He has the experience of devouring the fourfold cognitive activity of the *pramātṛ, pramāṇa, prameya,* and *pramā.* Abhinavagupta has described this entire process thus:

Pramātṛ-vargo mānaughaḥ pramāś-ca bahudhā sthitāḥ;
meyaugha iti yat sarvam atra cinmātrameva tat/
Iyatīṃ rūpa-vaicitrīṃ āśrayantyāḥ sva-saṃvidaḥ;
svācchandyam anapekṣam yat sā parā parameśvarī/
Imāḥ prāgukta-kalanās-tad-vijṛmbhocyate yataḥ;
kṣepo jñānam ca saṅkhyānaṃ gatir nāda iti kramat/

(Ibid., 4.171–74)

Since the Goddess Kālī is viewed as manifesting the four elements of the knowing process, so she is accordingly considered as being the embodiment of subjectivity. What it amounts to saying is that whatever concerns the phenomenal knowledge is related to the Goddess alone. As being the subject that knows, the Goddess, thus, has been referred to in such terms as *mātṛsadbhāva*. Concerning the Goddess as *mātṛsadbhāva* Abhinavagupta has this to say:

Mātṛsadbhāva-sajñāsyāstenoktā yat pramātṛṣu;
etāvadanta-saṃvittau pramātṛtvaṃ sphuṭbhavet/

(Ibid., 4.177)

The very inclination of the Absolute towards external manifestation (*kalanā*), which is eventuated by the Goddess, gives us the indication about the charm and beauty that is involved in any kind of divine creative activity. It is because of this fact that the Goddess in the *Niṣāṭana-āgama* has been spoken of as Vāmeśvarī, the one who has complete sway over the beautiful and the pleasing. Abhinavagupta has this to say concerning Vāmeśvarī: *vāmeśvarī śabdena proktā sā-niśi-sañcāre.*

It is quite clear that the role of Kālī in the Trika Śaivism of Kashmir is quite different from the one that occurs at the popular level of religiosity. Kālī as the Goddess represents the innate nature of the Absolute as Godhead, which in philosophical terms is called vibration (*spanda*), which is to say that the Ultimate is not a mere principle of abstraction, but is a mass of energetic bliss which spills over in the form of the cosmic activities of the Lord. The world that is out there is due to the Godhead of the Absolute, which is encapsulated by the concept *kālī*. It is this concept of *kālī* that a practitioner is to contemplate, so that he may realise as to who he is ontologically. As the energetic power of the Absolute, Kālī expresses the divinely engineered cosmic activities through her twelve aspects—and these aspects as powers have been deified, or should we say, personified. At the level of practice, it is integrated to the Method of Energy. Also the twelve aspects of Kālī, which are constitutive of the Godhead of the Absolute, jointly are known as the "wheel of powers" (*śakti-cakra*), and it is this

śakti-cakra that is meditated upon in the yoga of concentration (*dhyāna-yoga*) of the Individual Method (*āṇavopāya*). From the above exposition concerning the concept of Kālī in the Trika is quite different from the popular religiosity where the Goddess is depicted as being bloodthirsty. In the Trika the notion of Kālī is more philosophical than anthropomorphic. As a philosophic concept, it is used as one of the meditative means for arriving at the experience of the unity of Being.

9

The Esoteric Significance of Mātṛkā in Trika

As to how to reach the ultimate goal of life in terms of realizing one's essential nature as being identical with the Supreme Self or consciousness is the task that Trika theology has attempted to solve by devising such a triadic spiritual methods as would appropriately respond to the needs of each individual. Broadly speaking, Trika has devised a triad of methods that are known as the *āṇavopāya* (individualized method), *śāktopāya* (the method pertaining to energy), and the *śāmbhavopāya* (the method pertaining to Śiva). The most superior method among all of them is known as the method that pertains to Śiva. It is considered to be superior on account of it being less dependent on physical or mental effort and more on the operations of divine grace. Thus this method is viewed as being the most effective and quickest insofar as the realization of the innermost truth of the Self is concerned. As to what practices are constitutive of this method have elaborately been delineated in some such scriptural texts as the *Vijñānabhairava, Śivasūtra, Mālinīvijayottara, Parātriśikā*, etc. One of the constitutive elements of this method consists of what technically is called the *mātṛkā-yoga*, "or the yoga of letters." Insofar as what characterizes the *mātṛkā-yoga* is sufficiently hinted at as well as discussed in such texts of Abhinavagupta as the *Mālinīvijaya-vārttika* and the *Parātriśikā-vivaraṇa*. Abhinavagupta throws further light concerning the mystical significance of this form of yoga in his *Vivaraṇa* on the *Parātriśikā*.

The *mātṛkā* is basically such a form of practice in which the letters of Sanskrit alphabet are made use of as support or aid for

the purpose of meditation. When the letters of Sanskrit alphabet are arranged in a disordered fashion, it is called *mālinī*, viz., "garland of letters." And the irregular arrangement of the letters is made in the following order:

> *na, ri, rī, li, lī, tha, ca, dha, ī, ṇa, u, ū, ba, ka, kha, ga, gha, na, ī, a, va, bha, ya, u, ḍha, ṭha, jha, ña, ja, ra, ṭa, pa, cha, la, ā, sa, ḥ, ha, ṣa, kṣa, ma, śa, a, ta, e, ai, o, au, da, pha*

It is believed that their use as a technique of meditation gives immediate results insofar as the attainment of *bhukti* (worldly pleasure) and *mukti* (salvation) is concerned. The *mātṛkā* has not only a practical significance, but has also a philosophical significance, which Abhinavagupta, in the context of the philosophy of language, has discussed fully in his *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra*. Thus the letters of Sanskrit alphabet, in their *mātṛkā* and *mālinī* forms, are so used as to lead to the blossoming of knowledge with regard to the nature of reality.

The *mātṛkā* system of meditation, while making use of Sanskrit letters and their corresponding sounds, arrange letters in their regular order starting with the letter *a* and ending with that of *kṣa*. In contrast to the *mātṛkā* arrangement of letters, the *mālinī* system arranges letters in a disordered manner by mixing the vowels and consonants together in such a manner as to start with the letter *na* and end with that of *pha*. Also the letters and their corresponding sounds are used as a means of worshipping such powers of the Absolute as have been personified through such mystic syllables as are known the "seed-mantras" (*bīja-mantra*).

These mystic syllables or seed-mantras owe their existence to such perfect yogis who are known as Siddhas, or "the accomplished ones." The kind of seed-mantras that the Siddhas are supposed to have contemplated upon are such as would yield no lexical meaning—and it is for this reason that they are known as mystic syllables. Such syllables are constitutive of the seed-mantras as, for example, *Oṃ, hrīm, klīm, śrīm, aiṃ, sauḥ*, etc. These seed-mantras, in the language of a *tāntrika*, are also known as the *kāmarāja-bīja* or *kāmakalā*. As to how these seed-mantras are meditated upon may be illustrated by taking into consideration,

for example, the *kāmarāja-mantra klīm.* The *mantra,* as it is, is meditated upon in its two aspects, namely, *sakala* and *niṣkala.* In its *sakala* aspect, the *mantra* is comprised of *ka* and *la,* whereas in the *niṣkala* dimension it is free from such combination and consists only of *īm.*

The *mātṛkā-mālinī* are used as a means of attaining the highest state of spiritual vision, which is characterized by the realization that the so-called limited individual being is essentially identical with the infinite I-consciousness. It is this I-consciousness (*ahaṃ-vimarśa*) that shines forth in the form of absolute self-awareness (*ātma-bodha*). It is this absolute I-consciousness that contains within itself this entire external manifest order as a reflection of its own infinite powers, which is brought into being by the play of its own absolute free will. The Absolute as supreme consciousness envisions his absolute powers in the form of sixteen vowel-sounds and their letters from *a* to *ḥ.* Insofar as the consonants of the alphabet are concerned, they disclose the entire range of elements (*tattva*-s) from earth to Śakti. The letters and their sounds that represent this entire range of elements begin from *ka* and end with *kṣa.* It is the purpose of the *mātṛkā-yoga* to enable the aspirant to arrive at such a spiritual state whereby he may realize his perfect identity with the absolute I-consciousness, which, as it were, shines as the reflection of phenomenal diversity. This diversity of phenomena is so realized as to be identical with the absolute I-consciousness, which means that there is not the slightest hint of anything being different from it.

The Absolute of the Trika is endowed with infinite powers, and among these powers five, however, are considered to be the most prominent, which are the power of consciousness (*cit-śakti*), the power of bliss (*ānanda-śakti*), the power of will (*icchā-śakti*), the power of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*) and the power of action (*kriyā-śakti*). The first two powers, namely, those of consciousness and of bliss, may not be considered as representing divine powers, but may be viewed as constituting the essential nature of the Absolute. The first sixteen vowel-sounds and their letters, which are *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ri, rī, li, lī, ae, ai, o, au, ṃ, aḥ,* constitute, according to the *mātṛkā* system, the category of Śiva (*śiva-tattva*), which is the thirty-sixth category in the hierarchy of categories of

existence. Insofar as the first letter, namely, *a*, in the series of vowel letters is concerned, it is seen to embody the power of consciousness (*cit-śakti*) of the Absolute. The second letter, *ā*, is the embodiment of the power of bliss of the Absolute. According to the Trika thinking, the Absolute not only is consciousness (*cit*), but is also bliss (*ānanda*), which explains its dynamism in terms of being aware of itself (*vimarśa*). Also it explains the nature of the Absolute as being both consciousness and bliss, which in philosophical terms is called as light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and cognitive awareness (*vimarśa*). The category of Śiva in relation to the emanation of the universe denotes that no externalization of the Absolute has yet occurred. It is a state of perfect unity.

Insofar as the third absolute power of the Absolute is concerned, it is spoken of as the power of will (*icchā-śakti*), which is represented by the third and fourth vowels, namely, *i* and *ī*. There are, according to the Trika, two aspects of divine will: one is perfectly peaceful, which is embodied by the vowel *i*, and the other is always in the state of perturbation, and so is represented by the letter *ī*. The agitated state of the will does not mean that it somehow gets separated from the essential nature of the Lord. There is absolutely no such fissure in the unity of the Lord's will. However, the state of *jñāna-śakti* of the Lord, which is represented by the two vowels, namely, *u*, *ū*, is characterized both by a tendency towards externalization as well as by retraction of the movement towards external manifestation. The former tendency is represented by the letter *u*, which is technically called *unmeṣa* (viz., opening up), whereas the tendency towards self-introversion is represented by the letter *ū*, which is known as *ūnatā* or lessening. Since the tendency towards external manifestation is made to cease, it means that the Lord completely and perfectly reposes in his undifferentiated state of unity and oneness. This state of undifferentiated repose of the Absolute is embodied by the letters *ri*, *rī*, *li*, *lī*. Since these letters represent the undifferentiated state of Being, so it means that there is no possibility for the process of manifestation of the universe to be actualized. As the letters are the concrete expression of the transcendent character of the Absolute, so they have appropriately

been given the nomenclature of *amṛta-bīja*, or "the seed of immortality."

When the letters *a, ā*, which represent *cit-śakti* and *ānanda-śakti*, respectively are joined to letters *i, ī* of *icchā-śakti*, there is given rise to the letter *e*. Subsequently, is given birth to the letter *ai* when the three letters—*a, ā, e*—join together. Similarly, when the letters *a, ā* join with the letters *u, ū* of *jñāna-śakti*, there emerges the letter *o*. When the letter *o* is joined to letters *a, ā*, there comes into being the letter *au*. The emergence of these four letters, namely, of *e, ai, o, au*, represent the four states of the power of action, or *kriyā-śakti*. The first state of *kriyā-śakti*, which is represented by the letter *e*, is so obscure (*asphuṭa*) as to be unknowable. It is at the next level where the movement of action becomes clear (*sphuṭa*)—and this state of clarity is represented by the letter *ai*. Insofar as the third state of *kriyā-śakti* is concerned, it is a state in which the energy of action becomes clearer (*sphuṭatara*), and is represented by the letter *o*. Finally, we have the state in which the energy of action manifests itself in clearest (*sphuṭatama*) terms, and is represented by the letter *au*. All this points out as to how the intention in the mind of the Lord for external manifestation manifests itself progressively from the state of obscurity of intention to the clearest execution of action.

Although the universe may be the reflection-extension of the Lord himself, yet he suffers from no modification or change while emanating the universe out of himself, or should we say, while reflecting the universe in the manner an image is reflected in a mirror. It amounts to saying that the Absolute abides perfectly in its undifferentiated state even when engaged in the activity of emanation/manifestation—and this absolute undifferentiated state is represented by the letter *ṃ*. Insofar as the Lord's engagement in the process of emanation is concerned, it is represented by what is called *visarga* or the letter *ḥ*, which is represented by the two dots (:) one upon the other, and which respectively are known as *śiva-bindu* and *śakti-bindu*. All these vowel letters from *a* to *ḥ* represent the category of Śiva (*śiva-tattva*). The letter *a* represents the transcendent Absolute (*anuttara*), whereas the letter *ḥ* embodies the phenomenal manifestation/emanation

(*visarga*). The rest of the letters are the consonants of Sanskrit alphabet, and represent the thirty-five categories both of pure and impure manifestation.

Whether it is the manifestation of *tattvas* or of letters, it eventuates not in the manner of production, but in the manner of reflection, which is to say that it is the absolute free will (*svātantrya*) of the Lord that allows the process of manifestation to take place through the powers known as consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and action. Thus all the categories of existence have to be viewed as the reflection of the five powers of the Lord. It is the absolute free will of the Lord which, through the operation of five cosmic powers, gives rise to such elements as, for example, five *mahābhūta*-s, five *tanmātra*-s, five *karmendriya*-s, five *jñānendriya*-s, and so on. It must be kept in mind that these five powers of the Lord do not function in such a manner as if unrelated to each other. They are so related to each other as to be present simultaneously together. However, there is this coveat, which is this: each power is predominant in its own sphere even when other energies are present in it. When five is multiplied by five powers, we have the number twenty-five, which represents the twenty-five categories from earth (*pṛthvī*) to bound individual (*puruṣa*).

The five *mahābūta*-s or the gross elements consist of ether (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jala*) and earth, and are res-pectively represented by such letters as *na, gha, ga, kha,* and *ka.* It is the reflection of *cit-śakti* that is predominant in ether, whereas that of *ānanda-śakti* is predominant in air. Similarly, it is the reflection of *icchā-śakti* that is predominant in fire and that of *jñāna-śakti* in water. Finally, we have the element earth and it is the *kriyā-śakti* that is prominent. Insofar as the five *tanmātra*-s, or "the energetic mass," are concerned, they are the outcome of the reflection of the *icchā-śakti,* which is embodied by such letters as *i, ī.* It is *cit-śakti* that is predominant in sound-as-such (*śabda*), and the consonant letter that represents it is *na,* whereas *ānanda-śakti* is predominant in touch-as-such (*sparśa*), and the letter that represents it is *jha.* Similarly *icchā-śakti* is found to be dominant in form-as-such (*rūpa*). This *tanmātra* is represented by the letter *ja.* The *tanmātra* called taste-as-such (*rasa*) is the result of the

reflection of *jñāna-śakti*, and the letter that is representative of it is *cha*. Finally, we have smell-as-such (*gandha*), which is the result of the reflection of *kriyā-śakti*, and is represented by the letter *ca*.

Insofar as the organs of action (*karmendriya-s*) are concerned, they come into being when the letters *ṛi*, *ṛī*, which represent the state of *anāśrita-śiva*, are mixed with the five cosmic powers. The five consonants from *ṇa* to *ṭa* represent the organs of action. It is *cit-śakti* that is predominant in the organ of speech (*vāk*), and is represented by the letter *ṇa*. The organ of action, namely, hands (*pāṇi*), is the reflection of *ānanda-śakti*, and it is the letter *ḍha* that represents it. Insofar as the organ of locomotion (*pāda*) is concerned, it is the reflection of *icchā-śakti*, and is embodied by the letter *ḍa*. Similarly the organ of excretion (*pāyu*) is said to be the reflection of *jñāna-śakti*, and the letter *ṭha* is considered to be its representative. Finally, we have the sexual organ (*upastha*), which is said to be the reflection of *kriyā-śakti*, and the letter *ṭa* embodies it.

Insofar as the five organs of perception (*jñānendriya-s*) are concerned, they are the outcome of the vowels *ḷi* and *ḷī*, and their referent letters are the consonants from *na* to *ta*. The organ of smell (*ghrāṇa*), being the reflection of *cit-śakti*, has its referent in the letter *ta*, whereas the organ of taste (*jihva*) is reflected by the *ānanda-śakti* with letter *tha* as its referent. Insofar as the organ of touch (*tvak*) is concerned, it is considered to be the reflection of *icchā-śakti* with letter *da* as its referent. Then comes the organ of sight (*cakṣu*), which is dominated by *jñāna-śakti*, and has the letter *dha* as its referent. Finally, we have the organ of hearing (*śrota*), which is the reflection of *kriyā-śakti*. The referent letter it has is that of *na*.

The five elements of mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahaṅkāra*), matter (*prakṛti*) and self-monad (*puruṣa*) come into being when *jñāna-śakti* through the letters *u*, *ū* are so amalgamated with the rest of cosmic energies or powers as to facilitate the emergence of these elements. The referent letters that embody these five elements are the consonants from *ma* to *pa*. The self-monad (*puruṣa*), which represents the empirical individual, is the reflection of *cit-śakti*, and its referent letter is that of *ma*. The emergence of the principle of materiality, which is *prakṛti*, is due

to the reflection of *ānanda-śakti*, and it is the letter *bha* that is said to be its referent. Insofar as ego (*ahaṅkāra*) is concerned, it is said to be the reflection of *icchā-śakti* of the Lord, and is embodied by the letter *ba*. Likewise the element intellect (*buddhi*) is considered to be the result of the reflection of *jñāna-śakti*, and the consonant letter that represents it is *pha*. Finally, we have the element mind (*manas*), which emerges on account of the predominance of *kriyā-śakti*, and the letter that encapsulates, it is *pa*.

Insofar as the six coverings (*kañcuka*-s) of the self-monad are concerned, they are *māyā*, *niyati*, *kalā*, *rāga*, *vidyā*, and *kāla*. By joining *niyati* with *rāga* and *kalā* with *kāla* their number is reduced to four. By veiling the essential nature of the self-monad, they thereby, as it were, determine the internal states of *puruṣa* in terms of limitations. The limitation of time (*kāla*) and division (*kalā*) explain jointly as to how the limited individual suffers from the limitation of temporality as well as from the limitation of creativity—and such limitations are embodied by the letter *ya*. The covering of *vidyā* explains the limitation of knowledge, which is encapsulated by the letter *ra*. Insofar as the combination of *rāga* (attachment) and *niyati* (restriction) are concerned, it explains the limitation that is given rise to by attachment as well as by space, and such forms of limitation are embodied by the letter *la*. Finally, we have *māyā*, which is the source of every form of limitation, and it is the letter *va* that is considered its referent. These limitations, as it were, exist within *puruṣa*, and for this reason are said to represent the internal states (*antaḥstha*) of the empirical individual.

The four elements (*tattva*-s) of pure emanation (*śuddhādhvan*), viz., from Śakti to Śuddhavidyā, do not emerge on account of the cosmic powers of the Lord. They emerge when there is the internal swelling of the heat of creativity within the Lord. And on account of internal swelling or heating there spontaneously, as it were, is the spilling over of these elements of pure emanation. The emanation of Śuddhavidyā is characterised by the feeling of *ahaṃ-ahaṃ*/ *idaṃ-idaṃ*, and is represented by the letter *sa*. Insofar as the element Īśvara is concerned, it is characterised by the awareness of *idaṃ-idaṃ*, and is embodied by the letter *ṣa*. The

third element of pure emanation is that of Sadāśiva, which consists of the awareness of *ahaṃ-idaṃ*, and is represented by the letter *sa*. Finally, we have the element of Śakti, which is the embodiment of the state of *ahaṃ*. and the letter *ha* is considered to be its referent. As these letters embody the internal heating or swelling of creativity of the Lord, so they are known as *uṣma*.

The aim of this explanation is to point out the significance that is attached to the Sanskrit alphabet in the overall scheme of Trika. As the letters are considered to be divine, so their function in relation to emanation of phenomena is explained in terms of them being the source of the entire range of elements. These letters are used in the *mātṛkā-cakra* to explain both the ways of Śiva and Śakti. In the case of Śiva, it is the first letter *a* of the alphabet that is taken first. In doing so, it is thereby disclosed that this letter represents the initial movement of the Lord in the field of creativity. It is joined to the last letter of the alphabet, namely, *ha*—and this letter represents the state of repose or cessation as well as is the last letter of the *mātṛkā-cakra*. In joining the first letter to the last letter is thereby pointed out that all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet exist therein. Thus it is these two letters that are considered as being the womb of the entire range of letters. Moreover, when the vowel *ṃ* is joined to *aha*, we have the *mantra* of Śiva in form of *ahaṃ*. The letter *ṃ*, called *anusvāra*, denotes that, while the entire range of thirty elements, of one hundred eighteen worlds and the five circles (*kalā*-s) that are emanated on account of *a* and *ha*, there has actually been nothing emanated, because everything is, in the final analysis of the word, Śiva.

The function of *mātṛkā* in relation to Śakti differs from that of Śiva. Śiva, according to the Trika, is the one who emanates, whereas Śakti is the emanated. In philosophical language it would mean that Śiva embodies Being, whereas Śakti represents Becoming. The expansion of Śakti occurs when two energies join together—and this combination of two energies is symbolized by the first consonant, namely, *ka*, and the last consonant, which is *sa*. It is the combination of these two letters that gives rise to the *mantra* of Śakti, which is *kṣa*.

Insofar as *visarga* or emanation of *mātṛkā-cakra* is concerned,

it is said to be of three kinds, namely, *śāmbhava-visarga*, *śākta-visarga*, and *āṇava-visarga*. The *śāmbhava-visarga* is said to pertain to the state of *ānanda-śakti*, and is accordingly represented by the letter *a*. The mode of emanation is such as would lead to the cessation of mind (*citta-pralaya*), which means that it is a state in which the mind becomes totally dysfunctional, viz., attains the state of thoughtlessness. Being of the highest kind of emanation, it is accordingly also called *parā-visarga*, viz., supreme emanation. Insofar as the *śākta-visarga* is concerned, it is also known by the name of *parāparā-visarga* on account it being in the middle between the *śāmbhava-visarga* and the *āṇava-visarga*. This *visarga* is represented by the last vowel, namely, *ḥ*, which is known as *visarga* and is represented by two dots (:) one upon the other—the lower one representing Śakti and the upper one representing Śiva. At this level the mode of emanation is termed as that of *cittasaṃbodha*, which means of being alert or aware in the state of one-pointed concentration. Finally, we have the *āṇava-visarga*. It is also called the *aparā-visarga* on account of it being inferior. This inferior emanation occurs at the level of limited individual (*nara*). The letter that represents this emanation is the last letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, namely, *ha*. Insofar as the mode of *visarga* is concerned, it is called that point where the mind reposes in concentration (*cittaviśrānti*).

10

The Nature and Function of Grace

THE TRIKA CONCEPT of grace is such as would make it the basis, or should we say the impelling force behind the drive that ultimately terminates in the attainment of the soteric goal, which is nothing else than the realisation of the falling off the fetters that tie an individual existent to the wheel of becoming, viz., to transmigratory existence.[1] This endless series of rebirths is believed by most of the Indian religious schools of thought to have come about due to the beginningless ignorance (*avidyā, ajñāna*).[2] There may be difference of opinion as to what this ignorance is among the orthodox as well as heterodox schools of thought, but all of them agree that ignorance has no beginning. Although without a beginning in time, it is believed by all the schools of thought that this ignorance can be negated through supernal knowledge. These different schools of thought, however, differ in their understanding concerning the real nature of this supernal knowledge (*alaukika-jñāna*). This difference with regard to ignorance and supernal knowledge (*alaukika-jñāna*) among these schools stems from their respective metaphysical standpoints. The understanding of knowledge or ignorance of a non-dualist (*advaitin*) would evidently be different from the one who is a theist (*īśvara-vādin*). Again there would be difference of opinion among those who affirm reality and those who, like the Buddhists, neither deny nor affirm it.[3] All these various schools, no matter what their view of ignorance or of knowledge may be, agree on one point, which is ignorance is the cause of bondage, whereas supernal knowledge is that of liberation.

The Trika Śaivism of Kashmir, although agreeing to the idea of ignorance as being one of the fundamental causes of bondage, differs from views that the various schools of thought hold when it comes to the question of the nature of ignorance. It rejects the simplistic notion of ignorance as being without a beginning, and so eternal. It is so because it is philosophically fallacious to maintain that which is eternal can be negated. That which is eternal exists eternally, and so the question of negating it does not arise at all. It would mean that ignorance, which is viewed to be without origin, cannot at all be negated. In such a case there would be no possibility of obtaining release, through knowledge, from the fetters of bondage. Instead of accepting ignorance as being eternal, the Trika non-dualism adheres to the idea that the Absolute, viz., Paramaśiva, alone is without origin, and so it alone is eternal.[4] Thus the Trika philosophical formulation is such as would not grant any kind of eternity to ignorance. It may not be possible to tell as to when exactly ignorance began, but conceptually it is not impossible to speak of it as having a beginning.

The Trika notion of ignorance[5] as well as of knowledge,[6] and thereby of grace,[7] can be understood if we, first of all, make an endeavour at understanding as to how the Absolute as God is understood in this system. The Trika views the Absolute as being pure consciousness, and as consciousness it is linked to the infinite and limitless ocean. As there emerge and subside infinite number of waves, small and big, in the ocean, so in the absolute ocean of consciousness, due to its own self-will (*svecchā*), eventuate infinite number of waves and these waves are nothing but the spilling over of the bliss that is constitutive of the nature of the Absolute.[8] Thus the Absolute as God discloses his essential nature through the outpouring of his bliss in terms of the fivefold activity of emanation, preservation of what has been emanated, and resorption of the emanated. In addition to it, God also conceals his nature by reducing himself, through the process of manifesting the phenomenal world, to the atomic condition by taking the form of entities that are either sentient or insentient. While concealing his nature, God also discloses his nature by pouring out his grace (*śaktipāta*), and it is in and through grace that the

individual is uplifted from the condition in which he exists as a finite being. Thus the fivefold divine activity of God consists of emanation of the phenomenal, its preservation as well as its dissolution. In addition to these two cosmic activities, God also conceals as well as reveals himself.[9]

The emanation of the manifest universe is actualised either in the manner of reflection in a mirror or in the manner of bursting forth of the small sapling from a seed in the earth.[10] What it amounts to saying is that the universe lies, as it were, concealed as a potency in the supreme consciousness, which is Paramaśiva or Maheśvara. It could also be said that all the categories of existence (*tattva*-s) from earth (*dharā*) to Śiva exist potentially in Paramaśiva in the manner a plant exists potentially in a seed. It could also be said that just as the colourful plumage of a peacock exists in the yolk of the egg (*mayūraṇḍarasavat*), so does this entire universe exist in Paramaśiva.[11] The question may be raised as to what impells God to give rise to this universe? This question has to be evaluated from the point of axiology. Since nothing comes into being without reason, so there must be sufficient reason or purpose for God to let the universe be. If no purposeful explanation is offered concerning the emanation of the universe, then we are ending in the doctrine of chance, which says that everything comes into being without reason, prolongs due to some weakness, and ultimately passes away by chance. To all such despairing questions the answer that the Trika gives is that it is the very nature of God to make manifest what lies hidden within him. Just as it is the nature of the sun to shine, and thereby illumine everything, so likewise it is the nature of God to manifest the universe that exists potentially in him.[12]

It is not some necessity or lack that should be seen as being responsible in driving the creative nature of the Lord towards the vomiting of the universe. It is the autonomous will of the Lord that really materializes itself as the objective universe.[13] This materialization of the will (*icchā*) of the Lord (*īśa*) does not mean that there occurs some kind of change or transformation in the Being of God. In order to avoid the logical difficulty that comes to be due to the assertion that the universe is but the materialization of the Lord's will, the Trika thinkers have resorted

to the theory of appearance or of reflection. The theory maintains that the world is but an appearance of supreme consciousness. It is also asserted that the appearance of the universe is similar to the reflection that is reflected in a mirror. In such a scenario there is no possibility for transformation or change to occur in the unity of supreme consciousness.[14] While appearing as the limited subject and object in the universe, the Lord thereby conceals his essential nature. It is the point of obscuration of the Lord's essential nature that is marked by the Trika thinkers as the beginning of what is known as metaphysical ignorance. And it is because of this ignorance that the atomised individual thinks of himself as being limited. The sense of limitation comes to be on account of not recognizing what one's essential nature is, which is nothing else but I-consciousness itself

This metaphysical ignorance, which results from the divine activity of obscuration (*pidhāna*) of the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of Lord, expresses itself in a variety of ways through the mental apparatus of individual being. The evolution of the categories of existence as manifest entities as well as the various expressions of ignorance in the world, according to the Trika thinkers, is the first act of the play that the Lord enacts through his engagement with five cosmic activities and it is what constitutes the essential nature of the Lord.[15] The manifestation of the universe at the same time denotes the obscuration or concealment of the essential nature of the Lord. Thus there is, on the one hand, manifestation and, on the other, there occurs concealment, and both these activities, at the logical level of thought, are antithetical in character. While the first act of the divine play or game is characterised by obscuration, which results in the emergence of ignorance, the second act of this game is quite reverse to the first one, in that the act consists of what is called the flow of revelation (*anugraha*). It is in terms of revelation that the finite being is so uplifted from the terror of finitude as to allow him to realise his essential nature as being identical with, or non-different from, the Absolute.[16] The uplifting of the individual that occurs in terms of the fall of grace (*śaktipāta*) results in the emergence of supernal enlightenment in the interior of the individual being. Realising his non-difference from the Absolute, the individual comes to

know that it is essentially his own nature that is everything, which means that he discovers that this rich and diverse objective universe is nothing but the creation of his own will. Thus such an enlightened person sees the entire universe as being a play or reflection of I-consciousness (*ahaṃ-vimarśa*).[17]

This revelatory act of grace that God enacts for the sake of an individual should not be seen as the result or outcome of one's effort. It is so because human effort is limited in its capacity and range, whereas God, who is the goal, is so infinite and transcendent as to be beyond human thought and effort.[18] God can be known or reached only when he reveals himself in terms of his grace. Grace is such a gift of God that is totally free. It is not a gift that one has earned. Were this gift to be the result of one's religious deeds, then it would be no more a gift. Thus it is divine grace that leads the individual onto such a path which is permeated by such spirituality as would give rise to a knowledge that terminates in liberation.

This Trika concept of grace as a free gift of God is, more or less, to be found among the followers of Śaiva Siddhānta as well as among certain denominations of Vaiṣṇavism, like those of Viśiṣṭādvaitins and the Viśuddhādvaitins. While the Advaita Vedānta School of Śaṅkara assigns some kind of role to grace, yet it lays much more emphasis upon self-effort and in terms of which the intellectual understanding of the scriptures is highly valued. There are, however, some thinkers who are of the opinion that divine grace is the result of self-effort. This view is held on the ground that the actualisation of liberation would not be possible unless one performs meritorious and pious deeds, uproots the fetters of attachment, abolishes stains of impiety, and so on. Once the mind has become free from attachment as well as has attained steadiness, there is all the possibility for grace to descend. There are also some that think that God sends his grace only upon those who are devoted to him. In the midst of these various views concerning grace, Trika upholds the view that it is a free gift of God, and is not the result of our meritorious deed.[19] Since grace is not dependent on what we have done or not done, it is, according to the Trika thinking, completely dependent upon the free will of the Lord, and that is why it is

considered as a free gift, because it does not cost us anything. Abhinavagupta has at length spoken of the Trika view of grace in the *Mālinīvijaya-vārttika* thus:

> The grace of the Lord, thus, is not dependent on any external cause.[20]
>
> (Insofar as) the unencumbered power of the grace of Lord Śiva (is concerned), it has been accepted (by the philosophers on the ground that the perfect) state of liberation cannot be attained otherwise (viz., apart from grace), since the argunents offered by other schools of thought in this regard are of no avail.[21]

Almost similar argument concerning the nature of grace is to be found in the various Upaniṣads. Thus in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*[22] is delineated the concept of grace in this manner:

> The Self is not realised either by (engaging in logical) discussion, or through (such means that are dependent upon) the intellect, or by listening attentively to scriptures. The Self is realised (only) by a person whom the Self chooses for this end. (Thus does) It discloses its real nature.

From this explanation it may be concluded that grace is such a divine intervention of God in the affairs of man that is free and unasked. This is one side of the picture. The other side of the picture cannot be overlooked, which is the assertion that God cannot but send his grace upon such individuals who are intensely devoted to him, and this loving attachment for God is expressed through such means as worship of and devotion to the Lord. It is such an aspect of grace that finds its fullest expression in Utpaladeva:[23]

> Since the infinitesimal fraction of grace (towards me) is present in the Lord, and (so as a result of this) something resembling like devotion is emerging within me. As to when these two (viz., grace and devotion) will grow through mutual union, and (thereby) attain the state of desired perfection?

The perfect devotion for the Lord, according to Utpaladeva, emerges through the cultivation of such means as supernal

knowledge and inward contemplation. As a result of this is realised liberation, which is considered to be the end-goal of human life. Accordingly Utpaladeva explains it thus:

> Devotion towards You (should be seen) as the supreme aspect of pure knowledge as well as the final limit of yoga, O Lord! (as to) when shall my prayer for such (devotion) be made (perfectly) fruitful?[24]

The argument that the grace of God is the result of one's devotion to him would mean that grace is no more a free gift, but is a purchasable commodity. It would mean that God enters into some kind of bargain with the individual existent. Such a view of divine grace is not only degrading, but also would denote that God suffers from some kind of lack or deficiency. But such a view goes against the assertion that says that God is perfect, full and independent. If God is perfect and complete in himself, then he is no more in need of human props. So the argument that grace is the outcome of devotion does not fit within the overall view of Trika that considers God to be totally free and autonomous. Thus the Trika, while not denying the role of devotion, thinks of grace as being a free divine gift of the Lord. Even if grace is a free gift of God, why does God open himself to the criticism of being partial in the distribution of grace? Why is it that some individuals are offered the munificence of grace, whereas others are pushed into bondage? The response of the Trika concerning the so-called partiality of God is based upon its idea of the Absolute as being non-dual, which is to say that each individual, nay even the insentient entity, is but Śiva himself.[25] Thus whether one is liberated or is in the state of bondage, it is Śiva in both cases. The entire drama of liberation and bondage is nothing but the game enacted by the totally independent will of the Lord, which is to say that this entire universe is but a reflection of Śiva himself.[26] In such a scenario the question of partiality concerning the distribution of grace (*śaktipāta*) does not arise.[27]

The next question that follows from the above is this: Why should God unnecessarily enact this game of liberation and

bondage? The so-called individual existent in the state of bondage is made to suffer the pain of transmigration. Is it necessary for the Lord to make individuals to undergo the circuit of pain of conditioned existence? The response to this question is dependent on the view of the Absolute as being absolutely free, which is to say that the Trika Absolute is so free and autonomous as to be identical with freedom (*svātantrya*) itself. Since Paramaśiva is absolute freedom, so the question as to why he did this or didn't do that does not arise at all. There is another Trika view that maintains that it is the intrinsic nature of the Absolute as God to be engaged in the fivefold activity of emanation, preservation, resorption, concealment, and revelation. It is the concept of freedom as well as the fivefold activity that really defines the Trika concept of the Absolute.[28] Were God to be destitute of absolute freedom or of fivefold activity, then the very existence of God would cease to be because

> (God would be reduced) like an earthen pot to an insentient substance had (he been) restricted (only) to one of his aspects (namely, the transcendental consciousness), (and consequently) he would have to abandon (his innate nature) of being God and consciousness.[29]

Since divine grace is seen by Trika Śaivism as being the main driving force behind such human activities that are virtuous and have a spiritual orientation, so it would not be far-fetched to assert that the very desire for such knowledge that is liberative is the result of *śaktipāta*. It is in and through the act of grace that the highest limit of Self-realisation can be reached in terms of freedom from the fetters of bondage. Not only can Self-realisation be realised through grace, but equally also the burning love of the devotee for God can attain its absolute perfection. Insofar as grace in itself is concerned, it is said to be of other kinds, namely, intense (*tīvra*), moderate (*madhya*), and slow (*manda*). Each of these forms of grace have been sub-divided into three types of swift, moderate, and slow, which would mean that in total there are nine types of grace. As to what kind of these nine forms of grace are have been explained by Abhinavagupta exhaustively

in his *Tantrāloka*[30] as well as in the *Tantrasāra*.

Such individuals who are blessed with intensely intense form of grace either follow the way of no-means (*anopāya*) or the means of Śiva (*śāmbhavopāya*). In either case the aspirant is in no need to engage in any kind of mental or physical exertion. He need not perform religious rituals, or various forms of worship, or engage in any kind of meditation. At this level of grace there eventuates spontanenus Self-realisation. Upon gaining such recognitive knowledge in terms of which is realised perfect identity with the Absolute, the aspirant no more desires to be a participant in the miseries of ordinary people. The urge for dissolving themselves in the ocean of absolute consciousness is such that they do not want to prolong their earthly life any more. The only urge they have is to shed off this body so that total and perfect identity with the Absolute could be cemented. Thus the liberation that results from intense grace is known as being disembodied liberation (*videha-mukti*). The aspirant who, under the impact of intense grace, has been blessed with self-recognition does not live for long in the world. He may leave his mortal coils immediately after Self-realisation or after some time. But one thing is definite his stay in the world is always for a short duration of time. The ecstasy that emerges due to the intensely intense grace is such that the ecstatic completely loses interest in the affairs of the world, in the wellbeing of his body, or should we say that he has no more interest in or inclination towards that that is basically impure viz., under the impact of *māyā*.

Insofar as intense grace that is tempered by moderation (*tīvra-madya*) is concerned, it leads the aspirant, without resorting to such props as initiation (*dīkṣā*), study of scriptures or meditation, to such intuitive knowledge (*pratibhā*) that terminates in the realisation of the Self. The aspirant who is under the impact of such a form of grace is not in need of initiation precisely because his initiation is performed by such divine agencies that are known as yoginīs. It is these supernatural beings that are seen to be responsible in giving rise to intuition among the aspirants that are influenced by this form of grace. Upon gaining intuition, these aspirants are so empowered as to function as preceptors for those who are desirous of liberation. However, there may

arise such an occasion in the life of this type of an aspirant whereby he may not be certain concerning his intuitive knowledge. So he may be in need of such props as that of Self-contemplation or the study of scriptures, which would mean of seeking help from a realised preceptor. Upon gaining firm conviction concerning their intuition, the aspirants accordingly may impart the salvific knowledge to those who seek their guidance. The aspirant of this type always and uninterruptedly experiences the presence of Śiva both externally and internally. Also such aspirants are bestowed by such devotion towards Śiva that is firm and steady. The *mantra* that is made use of gains complete perfection. Experiencing the presence of Śiva within as well as without, they thereby gain control overall the thirty-six categories (*tattva*-s). Whatever activities are undertaken, they reach perfection in every sense of the word. Also they are so bestowed with such poetical insight as to have the knowledge concerning the essence of scriptures.

Insofar as intense-dim (*tīvra-manda*) grace is concerned, it functions in the life of an aspirant in such a manner as to lead him to a proper preceptor who has perfect knowledge of the Self. The aspirant, once in the presence of the preceptor, so submits as would lead him to complete abandonment of himself, and as a result of such submission the preceptor removes all the impurities (*mala*-s) that are seen to be the cause of such veils that conceal one's essential nature. The preceptor does it either by looking into the eyes of the aspirant or by touching his body or by instructing him in the sacred lore of scriptures. The cleansing process is such as would result in liberation from bondage without having to undergo the process of formal initiation concerning the practices of yoga. Since the knowledge that the aspirant has concerning reality is not of spontaneous type, so his knowledge is derivative in the sense that it is dependent on the grace of the preceptor. Thus this supernal knowledge is obtained through such non-formal initiation as would be called knowledge-initiation (*jñāna-dīkṣā*).

Insofar as the third type of grace, namely, the dim one, is concerned, it so empowers the aspirant as would allow him the entrance into the divine abode of the Absolute while still living

in the world. Such aspirants consider their body as a mere instrument for tasting the flavour of the divine delight, which results from the ecstasy of Self-realisation. While still alive, they attain what is called liberation-while-alive (*jīvan-mukti*). Upon discarding the body, such aspirants ultimately gain total identity with the Absolute in terms of the attainment of the state of Śivahood.

Having so far discussed three main forms of grace, we shall now take into consideration such forms of grace that are of the nature of subtypes. The first form of grace of this type is known as that of intense-but-moderate (*tīvra-madhya*). This form of grace leads the aspirant to a proper preceptor who, through the initiation of sonship (*putraka-dīkṣā*), adopts the disciple as being his son or daughter. It is within the ambience of such relationship that the preceptor (*guru*) imparts the supernal knowledge to the disciple. However, the disciple, while still alive, does not have the possibility of actualising Self-realisation in terms of knowledge of identity with the Absolute. It is only upon death that he merges in the Absolute, and thereby gains complete freedom from bondage.

The fifth form of grace is known as moderately moderate (*madhya-madhya*). The aspirant who is under the influence of this form of grace, is much more inclined towards the enjoyment of such powers that are supernatural in character. This does not mean that he is not desirous of liberation. However, his desire for liberation is not so strong as would result in the attainment of Śivahood while still alive. It is only after death that this state of Śivahood is realised

The aspirant who operates under the influence of dim-moderate (*manda-madhya*) form of grace has no possibility of actualising liberation either while alive or after death. Such an aspirant, while undergoing initiation, is established by the preceptor in such a category (*tattva*) that is considered suitable for him. Upon death, he obtains the body of the *tattva* in which his preceptor has established him. It is through this new body that he enjoys such delights of the *tattva* that are specific to it. This kind of aspirant attains the state of Śivahood only upon departing from the realm in which he finds himself. It is a

liberation that accrues in stages, and so accordingly may be termed as being sequential liberation (*krama-mukti*).

Next subtype of grace is such as would be intense but tempered by dimness (*tīvra-manda*). The aspirant upon whom this form of grace descends has the possibility of attaining a purer type of existence in some higher realm (*loka*) by transcending the embodied existence. The superior forms of delight that this aspirant enjoys are far more comprehensive than the ones that are available through such grace that is both dim and moderate. The aspirant attains perfect Śivahood only upon having satiated himself with delights that he has been seeking or desiring. The liberation that comes to this aspirant is in steps (*krama*).

The aspirant upon whom descends moderate but dim (*madhya-manda*) form of grace ascends to such a realm that is far better and superior than the physical world. Upon having appeased himself with the delights of the realm, the aspirant is again initiated by the presiding deity of the realm. Due to the compassion and kindness of the deity, the aspirant passes through various realms until he finally is blessed with the realisation of Śivahood.

Finally, we have grace that is extremely dim (*manda-manda*). This form of grace enables the aspirant to have the experience of the following states: (a) the experience of being established in the realm of the Lord of the world (*sālokya*), (b) the experience of being in close proximity to the Lord (*sāmīpya*), and (c) the experience of partial unity with the Lord (*sāyujya*). Insofar as the realisation of liberation in terms of identity with the Absolute is concerned, it is attained in stages.

Whatever be the typological classification of grace, the question that has to be answered is why, in the first place, there arose need for such a doctrine as that of grace? The doctrine of grace seems to have arisen in the midst of such creative tension whereby the pendulum moves between the idea of self-dependence and the other-dependence. This theory of self-dependence and other-dependence envisages or vuisualises such a spiritual trajectory whereby choice has to be made concerning the method of reaching the ultimate religious goal, which is that of salvation. There are some, like the Buddhists or the followers of yoga, who

think that sheer self-effort is sufficient for reaching the final goal of salvation. There are, however, others who do not subscribe to such a view, for they believe that the task is so difficult and arduous as to be beyond the power and reach of man in general. Recognising human finitude as well as limited capacities of man in general, the followers of the theory of other-dependence think that the only relief that can be offered against all forms of despair is by inserting, in the form of grace, the divine intervention in the affairs of man. It is in the context of such an understanding that the concept of grace has been allowed to play a major role in the overall religious doctrinal set-up. Thus grace has been interpreted as being a free divine gift of God to man. The idea of grace thus explains the compassionate nature of God. And sometimes grace has been linked to the care that a cat showers upon her kitten when she uplifts them without causing any injury. Also divine grace is linked to what is called the monkey-type. As the young ones hold tightly to their mother, so does an individual hold onto God. Thus grace, in the midst of despair and hopelessness, is seen the last resort of hope and refuge by them who have understood the nature of human condition as being characterised by finitude.

References

1. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has given vent to this feeling concerning the divine grace as the only means of obtaining release from bondage in his *Stavacintāmaṇi* (vv. 14–15) thus: "O joyous Existence! Who is not desirous (in this world) of realising your (true) reality, which, (beyond any doubt), is (fully) competent in removing the fear of repeated rebirths (from our hearts)? We must, O Lord of the universe, obtain throughout our lives the permanent (stability) of your presence, through your grace, by fixing our minds on you (alone)."
2. Recognising the fact that it is ignorance that is the basic cause of human misery in the form of bondage of repeated rebirths, Utpaladeva is not satisfied with this kind knowledge. He wants God to answer the question as to why there is ignorance at all: "Why does the thought of your slave wander off on the wrong

road, avoiding its intuitive sense of direction towards identity with you, (while knowing all the time) that there exists no other glory here on earth, no other joy?" *Śivastotrāvalī*, 4.7.

3. The first item, according to the Buddhists, in the series that constitute the chain of becoming (*bhava-cakra*) is ignorance. The total number of factors in the series are twelve, beginning with ignorance and ending with old age and death. In the context of the theory of dependent-origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) these factors are so interdependent upon each other as to lead one to other, and thereby putting the wheel of existence into circular motion. Since the revolving of the wheel is circular, so the origin of ignorance cannot be traced. Since ignorance is seen to be the rootcause of transmigratory existence, so it is accordingly linked to a blind woman.
4. Since the Trika is a non-dual system of thought, so it cannot agree to the existence of a separate entity like ignorance as being eternal and without origin. It looks at everything as the expression of Śiva, which would mean that both ignorance and liberation are but the game of Śiva. As to what the Absolute is explained by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrasāra* (ch. 2) thus: "All this is therefore one Reality, a Reality undivided by time, unconfined by space, unenfeebled by accidents, unconstrained by configurations, unexpressed by words and unmanifested by norms of knowledge. It is the cause, at Its own will and pleasure, of the attainment of essences of these things, from time to norms. It is the sovereignly free Reality, the concentration of beatitude. And I am absolutely It—there, within me, is reflected the universe." Jose Pereira, *Hindu Theology: A Reader.* Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, Image Books, 1976, p. 376.
5. Although accepting ignorance (*avidyā*) along with *karman* as being the basic cause of transmigratory existence (*Tantrāloka*, 1.25), yet the Trika understanding of ignorance is not in terms of total absence of knowledge (*na-jñāna*) with regard to Reality. The Trika looks at ignorance as being such a form of knowledge that is imperfect, erroneous or incomplete, and that is why ignorance is referred to as being such knowledge that is deficient or suffers from some form of lack (*apūrṇa-khyāti*). The Trika, however, has classified ignorance into what it calls innate ignorance (*pauruṣa-ajñāna*) and intellectual ignorance (*bauddha-ajñāna*) (ibid., 1.36–38). As the function of ignorance is to conceal, so the function of knowledge, as the opposite of ignorance,' is to reveal, to disclose that which we know imperfectly. It

is because of this reason that knowledge is identified with consciousness because of it being of the nature of light (*prakāśa*). Since light reveals or makes things manifest, so consciousness is seen to be the nature of reality, because of it being the source of revelation (ibid., 1.17, 41, 47).

6. Knowledge, whether intellectual or innate, is always of the nature of revelation. Since knowledge reveals Reality as being of non-dual nature, so it is but natural for the Trika to assign the soteriological function of liberation to it. It is on account of the attainment of supernal knowledge that liberation from bondage is realised, which at the same time means to recognise the nature of one's subjectivity to be non-different from the Absolute. They who are desirous of this supernal knowledge are led on this path by the grace (*anugraha*) of the Lord (ibid., 13.105). Thus the saving knowledge is seen to be the result of divine intervention in terms of the descent of grace (*śaktipāta*) (ibid., 13.116).
7. The Trika notion of grace (*śaktipāta*) is such that sees it as the basic cause of liberation (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.1.1). This divine grace, however, is not the result of one's meritorious deeds, but is the free divine gift of God to man (ibid., 13.256–57). The Trika looks at grace, along with devotional love for God, as the legitimate means for the attainment of the state of liberation. Thus the Trika makes it clear that apart from grace the attainment of liberation is an improbability. So it would not be far-fetched to speak of Trika as representing the mystique of grace.
8. *Śivadṛṣṭi*, 1.15–17: *bodasya-svātmā-niṣṭhasya racanāṃ prati nirvṛtiḥ/ tadāsthapravikāsau yastad-aunmukhya pracakṣyate// kiṃciducchūnatā sa eva mahadbhiḥ kaiścid-ucayate/ tasya-icchā kāryatāṃ yātā yayā sa icchaḥ sa jāyate//*
9. *Īśvarapratabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.5.7: *cidātmaiva hi devo' ntaḥ sthitaṃ icchā-vaśād bahiḥ yogīva nirupādānaṃ artha-jātam prakāśayet//* See *Tantrāloka*, 1.59.60.
10. *Paramārthasāra*, vv. 12–13: *darpaṇabimbe yadvan nagara-grāma-ādi citramavibhāgi/ bhāti-vibhāgenaiva ca parasparaṃ darpaṇādapi ca . . . vimalatamaparama-bhairava-bhodhāta tadvat vibhāga-śūnyaṃ api/ anonayaṃ ca tato'pi ca vibhaktamābhāti jagad-etat//* See also *Parātriśikā*, v. 24; *Tantrāloka*, 3.100; *Śivadṛṣṭi*, 5.105–9.
11. *Ṣaṭtriṃśat-tattva-sandho*, v.1: *yadayaṃ anuttara-mūrti-nijecchayā-akhilaṃ-idaṃ jagadsṛṣṭuṃ pa-spande sa spandaḥ prathamaḥ śakti-tattvam-ucayate tajjaniḥ//* See also *Mahārthamañjarī* (Trivandrum

Edition), p. 40.

12. *Īśvarapratyabjiñā-kārikā*, 1.5.15: *sā sphurattā mahāsattā deśa-kāla-aviśeṣinī/saiṣā sāratayā proktā hṛdayaṃ parameṣṭhnaḥ//*
13. Maheśvarānanda, *Mahārthamañjarī*, p. 40.
14. *Tantrāloka*, 3.4.
15. Ibid., 1.79.
16. Ibid., 13.256–57; *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.1.1.
17. *Paramārthasāra*, vv. 48–50; *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, 1.5.1.
18. *Tantrāloka*, 1.59.60.
19. *Mālinīvijayavārttika*, 1.686–92.
20. Ibid., 1.168.
21. Ibid., 1.695.
22. *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, 1.2.22.
23. *Śivastotrāvalī*, 8.1.
24. Ibid., 9.9.
25. *Tantrāloka*, 2.16: *amuṣmin paramādvite prakāśātmani ko'paraḥ*. Also see *Bhāskarī*, 1.52: *tasmād viṣyābhimataṃ vastus śarīratayā gṛhītvā tavannirbhāsamāna ātmaiva prakāśate viccheda-śūnyaḥ*.
26. *Bodhapañcadaśikā*, v.14: *etau bandha-vimokṣau ca/ parameśa-svarūpataḥ/ sa bhidyate na bhedo hi/tattvataḥ parameśvare//*
27. *Mālinīvijayavārttika*, 1.108: *ucayate na advaye amuṣmin daivataṃ na asti-eva tattvataḥ/ uktaṃ hi bhedavandhe-api vibhau bhedāvabhāsanaṃ// na nirodho na ca utpattir na bhādo na ca sādhakā/ na mumukṣur na van muktuṃ ityeṣa paramārthataḥ//* (Ibid., 2.32)
28. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.1.13: *citiḥ pratyavamarśātmā parāvāk sva-rasoditā svātantryam etan mukhyaṃ tad aiśvaryaṃ paramātmanaḥ//* See also *Mālinīvijayavārttika*, 1.123: *idaṃ hi tat parādvaitaṃ bheda-tyāga-grahau na yat.*
29. *Tantrāloka*, 3.101. See also 3.100: *asthāsyad-eka-rūpeṇa vapuṣā cet-maheśvaraḥ/ maheśvaratvaṃ saṃvit-tvaṃ tadatyakṣyad ghaṭa-ādi-vat/*
30. Abhinavagupta deals exhaustively with the nature and types of grace in his *Tantrāloka*, ch. 13.

11

The Trika Forms of Initiation

THE RITE OF INITIATION (*dīkṣā*) has both the sociological as well as theological function. As a sociological norm, the rite of initiation empowers an individual to become a member of such a religious group who subscribe to common doctrines and beliefs with regard to the supernatural. Thus an initiation may be considered such an imprint that empowers the individual to participate fully in the religious activities of the group. It is within this framework that an another understanding concerning initiation developed, and it is Tantrism that, by and large, is responsible for this new understanding. This new understanding centres on the idea that no soteric goal of liberation (*mukti, mokṣa*) can be reached unless initiated by a qualified preceptor, a preceptor who himself has realised the goal of liberation. It is under the impact of this tantric understanding that each religious denomination, within the overall frame of Hinduism, has developed its own forms of initiation as a means of reaching the state of liberation. Insofar as the Trika Śaivism of Kashmir is concerned, it broadly follows the tantric understanding of initiation, which is mainly characterised by an ethos that is esoteric.

Like all the tantric systems, the Trika also believes that only such a person has the power of initiating people into the secret lore of salvific methods who himself has realised the ultimate state of liberation. Such a person not only has the authority of initiating people in the secret lore of the methods of liberation, but is also so empowered as to lead people to liberation. Such an act of liberating people from the trammels of phenomenal

existence is technically called grace (*śaktipāta, anugraha, prasāda*). Such a view tells us that none is qualified to engage in secret practices unless initiated by a competent preceptor. It is through the channel of a preceptor that divine grace flows forth. At the time of initiation, the preceptor directs this grace towards the disciple. As a result of this divine grace, the disciple is so empowered as to reach his soteric goal of liberation.

From a theological perspective, initiation is not simply a means of gaining entrance into a particular social group, but is basically a means of transcending the profane structure of space and time. The space-time structure is considered as being profane on account of it being subject to such forces that do not allow the individual to know as to what his essential nature is. As an opposite of the sacred, the profane has to be transcended, and upon its transcendence entrance into the sacred is realised. This transcendence of the profane, at the individual level, is actualised by dying symbolically to what the space-time structure represents. This dying to the profane is actualised through such rituals that are used at the time of initiation. Thus initiation may be considered to be such a process whereby the initiate dies to the life that he lived prior to initiation, which in theological language would mean that the initiate is being transported from the profane realm on to the realm that is sacred and transcendental. It is this insignia of transposition of the initiate into the sacred that makes him unique and different from the man-in-the-street. So an initiate is the one who, in the words of a Pentecostal, is born again, because he has taken rebirth in the realm of the sacred by dying to that that is profane.

It is to this broad framework of understanding, both sociological and theological, concerning initiation to which the Trika Śaivism adheres as well as follows. Whatever forms of initiation the Trika has formulated, they have been so formulated as to fulfil the twin tantric goals, which are the attainment of worldly prosperity (*bhoga*) as well as soteriological liberation (*mokṣa*). Also the typology of Trika initiation is determined by the psychological make up of an individual. There are individual beings who intellectually are sharp and spiritually mature, and the form of initiation for such people has to be of refined and

superior form. There are also people who are less developed both mentally and spiritually, and so such people cannot be initiated in such soteric methods that are sophisticated and complex. They would have to be initiated in such methods that they can follow, practice and cultivate. It is within this conceptual framework that the Trika Śaivism has formulated different levels of initiation. Thus the levels of initiation correspond to the psychological typology of individuals, which means that there are forms of initiation which may be suitable to less intelligent people and also there are such kinds of initiation that are meant for people who are mentally sharp. Even though imparted by a guru, initiation, according to the Trika, is basically considered to be the free and gracious act of God. This is so because God acts in and through guru, who himself is viewed as being God in human form. When this concept is further elaborated, it means that only such a person is initiated by a right preceptor on whom God is gracious, which in practical terms means that there is the divine descent of grace upon the individual who is to be initiated. Since grace is considered as a free gift of God, it denotes that there is no restriction of caste or creed or of sex with regard to the initiate. Anyone can be initiated in the secret as well as sacred lore of the Trika provided he is earnest in his search for truth/ liberation. The minimum requirement that is required from the seeker is devotion to Śiva as well as a burning desire for liberation. Devotion to Śiva and desire for liberation are, according to the Trika, the outcome of divine grace, which means that only such a person develops these dispositions on whom occurs the descent of divine grace. In whom these dispositions are present is viewed to be a person who has been blessed by the grace of God, and so accordingly is considered eligible for initiation.

Grace, according to the Trika thinking, is a free and independent act of God. Grace, therefore, is not the result of our good deeds or how faithfully we have followed religious life. Were grace to be the outcome of our deeds, it would be no more an independent act of God. God would be so bound by our good acts that he would have to send his grace upon us. Such an understanding of grace would transform God into an automaton. Since God is free and sovereign, so he cannot be

bound by anything. The concept of grace as an independent act should also be seen in the context of wrath of God. The Trika, thus, advocates that God can be both gracious as well as wrathful and both these acts are the free expression of divine activity. This freedom of God is termed as being a divine play. Were God destitute of this playful nature, he would then be as lifeless as is space.

The Trika Śaivism considers initiation as a means for attaining both the worldly enjoyments (*bhoga*) as well as soteric freedom (*mokṣa*). There are some people who are more interested in gaining success in the world than in soteric liberation. There are also people who consider worldly enjoyments of less importance when compared to the bliss that accrues upon the attainment of liberation. As people generally possess different degrees of capability, so it would mean that each person would have to be so initiated as would be suitable to his mental make up. It is in the context of this understanding of people that the Trika has devised different types of initiation. The highest kind of initiation is known as *yoginī-dīkṣā.* It is an initiation that God performs himself by exercising his powers through female deities who are known as "yoginīs." A person who is so initiated is in no need of formal kind of initiation. He also does not have to study the scriptures from any preceptor. It is said that God sends so powerful grace, through yoginīs, upon this kind of aspirant that all his impurities, caused by *māyā,* are dissolved. As a result of the dissolution of impurities, there emerges in the aspirant spontaneously the experience of unity of Being. It is an experience in terms of which the aspirant has the recognition of his subjectivity as being non-different from the Absolute, namely, Paramaśiva. The non-dualistic knowledge that emerges in this kind of aspirant is known as knowledge characterised by intuition (*pratibhā-jñāna*).

Next in the descending order is the "initiation of knowledge" (*jñāna-dīkṣā*). It is an initiation that is performed by a preceptor of a very high order. It is an initiation through which the light of divine knowledge is kindled in the disciple. The preceptor does it by being gracious towards the disciple. The mode of performing this kind of initiation is either in terms of gaze or touch or through the medium of speech. Also the preceptor may offer the "gift of

food" (*prasāda*) to the disciple. It is through such means that the preceptor transmits the divine knowledge unto the disciple. Upon the reception of this knowledge, the disciple begins to have the experience of his divinity, which means that he has the experience of himself as being none else than Paramaśiva. This form of initiation is not dependent on any kind of ritual. It is an initiation that occurs spontaneously. This type of initiation pertains to the highest soteric method of salvation, namely, the *anopāya*, which technically is no method.

The "initiation of knowledge" may be compared to the transmission of light from one lamp to another. The lamp that is enkindled by the light of another lamp attains as well as reflects the same nature as exists in the lamp from which the light has been transmitted. In relation to the disciple it means that the disciple is so enlightened by the light of knowledge that he realises his nature to be nothing else but the light of knowledge itself, which within the Trika system is equated with the Absolute.

There is also the "initiation of knowledge" that is little lower than the one that is imparted in the *anopāya*. This lower kind of "initiation of knowledge" is imparted to those disciples who are initiated in the Method of Śiva or what is called *śāmbhavopāya*. At this level of initiation the disciple is taught the necessary teachings of the scripture concerning the nature of the Self. He is also taught as to how to arouse the knowledge of the Self without resorting to any kind of contemplative practice. The disciple is taught to visualise the entire phenomenon as shining in his own Self like a reflection, which, at the level of realisation, is interpreted to mean that the phenomenon is nothing else but the reflection of one's own subjectivity. Upon receiving this teaching from the preceptor, the disciple begins to visualise the universe as being the reflection of his own Self, which leads him to realise that whatever seemingly is experienced as being external to consciousness has always been shining within his own-being. Accordingly he experiences himself as being the master of this entire phenomenal universe, which ultimately results in the mystical experience of non-duality. It is an initiation in which contemplative absorption is not needed. It is through the faculty of understanding that the direct realisation of the unity of Being

is attained, and in terms of which is transcended the entire operation of the psychic apparatus. It is a direct realisation of the Self in terms of the disclosure or revelation of Being. Since there is involved some kind of introversive practice, so this initiation can also be counted as a kind of *yoga-dīskṣā*, viz., yogic form of initiation.

The elaborate yogic forms of initiation (*yoga-dīkṣā*), however, are made use of either in the Method of Energy (*śāktopāya*) or in the Individual Method (*āṇavopāya*). In both these methods the focus of meditative attention are those elements that, prior to enlightenment, are experienced other than one's self. In the Method of Energy the meditative techniques are purely mental, whereas the Individual Method is characterised by techniques that are purely external. Whatever mental or physical means are used in these methods, they are taught by the preceptor verbally as well as are demonstrated physically. The disciple will not, however, grasp them, or make their proper use, unless the preceptor is gracious. It is the gracious gaze of the teacher that works in such a manner in the disciple invisibly as to lead to the claming of the impurities. While imparting initiation in any of the three methods, the preceptor does it in accordance with the gracious will of the Lord. It is through this gracious will of the Lord, which comes in and through the preceptor, which so empowers the disciple as to attain the appropriate result.

Mostly people are not spiritually so mature as to plunge directly in the superior ways of salvation. It is for such people that such methods have been devised as would fulfil their spiritual requirements. For such people rituals like worship of deities, drawing of mystical diagrams as aids in meditation, offering of oblations into the sacred fire, etc., have been devised. All these external modes of ritual are so used as would lead to the deepening of concentration. These ritualised modes of practice fall within the frame of what technically is known as the "action-oriented initiation" (*kriyā-dīkṣā*), and are mainly used within the context of the Individual Method. Whatever rituals have been prescribed by the Trika, they are not intended to contradict or transcend the Vedic rituals. These rituals are meant for all and are basically soteric. Mostly such people are initiated in the action-oriented initiation

that have more interest in the attainment of worldly pleasures than in the realisation of liberation. The ritualised initiation, however, can be very helpful in leading the practitioner to higher forms of yogic practices, like those of the Method of Energy or the Method of Śiva.

The common type of ritualised initiation is known as the "general initiation" (*samaya-dīkṣā*). In this initiation are included all the above mentioned elements of *kriyā-dīkṣā*. Once initiated, the disciple is known as a *samayin* and the spiritual discipline that he is asked to cultivate is called *samayācāra*. It is as a *samayin* that the practitioner engages himself in the study of the Trika scriptures under the supervision of his spiritual director. He also engages in such yogic practices that the preceptor has prescribed. There comes a time when the disciple gains such proficiency as to be able to practice the finer aspects of the Trika yoga.

The other form of ritualised initiation is known as the "sonship initiation" (*putraka-dīkṣā*). It is a form of initiation that includes all the elements, with slight variation, of the *samaya-dīkṣā*. The disciple, upon his initiation, is treated as a son by the preceptor. It is this initiatory relationship of father (preceptor) and son (disciple) between Somānanda, Utpaladeva, and Lakṣmaṇagupta about which Abhinavagupta speaks thus: *somānandātmajotpalaja-lakṣmanaguptanāthaḥ*. The difference that exists between the *samaya-dīkṣā* and the *putraka-dīkṣā* consists in the following: in the case of the former initiation the disciple is simply put on to the path of liberation, whereas in the case of latter initiation the disciple not only is put on the path of liberation, but he also is freed from the consequences of his past *karman* or deeds. The disciples of the *putraka-dīkṣā* class that are desirous of delectable experiences are led, through what is called the *yojanikā* rite, to some higher divine abodes where they have the possibility of fulfilling their desires. Upon experiencing the superior forms of enjoyment of the higher abodes, the aspirant ultimately reaches his final soteriological goal, which is that of the realisation of the unity of Being.

Many Kaula initiatory rites have been incorporated into the overall soteriological frame of the Trika, and one such initiatory rite is known as the *vedha-dīkṣā*. Through this initiation the

kuṇḍalinī power is aroused, and upon its arousal, it is allowed to move upward towards the head by penetrating the six mystical wheels of energy that lie along the spinal cord. Upon reaching the top of the head, or what is called the thousand-petalled wheel (*sahasrāra-cakra*), it submerges in what may be called the cosmic consciousness, or which theologically is termed as Śiva. It is upon the union of Śiva and Śakti that the aspirant has the taste of the transcendent bliss of liberation.

There are, besides the above-mentioned forms of initiation, quite a number of initiations that need to be considered. One such wonderful initiation is known as the *prāṇotkramana-dīkṣā*. Only such a yogi can impart this kind of initiation who is the embodiment of divine powers. The yogi of this type can even know the time of death of his disciple. Prior to the death of the disciple, the preceptor performs a special kind of *kriyā-dīkṣā* in which are used the *mantra*-s of *brahmavidyā*. The aim of this initiation is to push up the animation of the disciple from the toes to the top of the head. While pushing the animation upward, the lower limbs of the body, one by one, become lifeless. This process continues till the time the crown of the head bursts open, thereby allowing the subtle body to depart from the physical body. As a result of this the entire body becomes inanimate. In this manner the disciple is even freed from his subtle body, the five coverings (*kañcuka*-s); and *māyā*, and subsequently, the disciple is enabled to have the experience of liberative integration with the Absolute.

There is also an initiation that is generally performed upon the death of the disciple, and such a kind of initiation is known as the *jala-prayoga-dīkṣā*. It is an initiation that belongs to the *parokṣadīkṣā* class of initiation, viz., initiation performed in the absence of the disciple. Only such preceptor who has become the master of divine powers conducts this kind of initiation. Prior to the initiation of the dead disciple, the preceptor chooses a spot where the initiatory rite has to be conducted. The spot of the rite has to be purified, which is accomplished by sprinkling water over it. Mere sprinkling of water will not transform the spot into a sacred space. It is the utterance of specific *mantra*-s that so empowers the water that the spot is automatically trans-

formed into the sacred space. Once the spot has been sacralised, then the preceptor draws what is called the magic web (*indra-jāla*). While drawing the magic web, the preceptor utters *mantra*-s that are suitable to the occasion. Once the drawing of the magic web has been accomplished, the preceptor accordingly places symbolically the body of the dead disciple on the magic web, which is either made of cow dung or of *kuśa* grass. Upon the placement of the body on the magic web, the preceptor utters such *mantra*-s that catch the soul of the dead disciple and places it in the symbolic body. Upon the placement of the soul in the symbolic body, the preceptor conducts the rite of initiation. At the end of the ritual of initiation, the body is offered as an oblation into the sacred fire. As a result of this initiation, the disciple is believed to have attained the perfect and liberative unity with the Absolute.

This initiatory rite is also performed for those disciples that are living, but are not present. In the case of such a disciple this initiatory rite is conducted without resorting to the procedure of calling the soul of the disciple. While conducting this initiation, the preceptor thinks of the disciple in such a powerful manner as would result in a spontaneous self-realisation, and consequently, the disciple becomes liberated while still living.

There is an initiation that is conducted by the preceptor for the destruction of the karmic seeds of the disciple, and such a kind of initiation is known as the "non-fruit bearing initiation" (*nirbīja-dīkṣā*). The preceptor, at the time of initiation, keeps some live seeds of some fruit or grain in his right hand, which accordingly is placed upon the head of the disciple. The rite of initiation is so powerful as to result in the destruction of impurities as well as of karmic seeds of the disciple. As a result of the destruction of the karmic seeds, the rite has appropriately been termed as being non-fruit bearing. As to whether the rite has been successful or not is tested by sowing the seeds in the soil. If the seeds do not germinate, it means that the rite of initiation has been successful.

The purpose of initiation within the Trika system basically is to enable the disciple to transcend the profane structure of space and time. It is through the transcendence of space-time that the

disciple realises his essential nature in terms of the mystical experience of unity of Being. It is this experience of the unity of Being that is equated with the soteriological liberation. It is a liberation that frees the individual being from the bondage of rebirth. The Trika, however, recognises that there are individuals who would, in addition to the attainment of liberation, like to enjoy life to the full. For such people special kinds of initiation have been formulated. The Trika, thus, has struck a balance between what it calls physical enjoyment (*bhoga*) and liberation (*mokṣa*). Whatever be the nature of initiation, it can be conducted only by a person who is competent and is, at the same time, one with the Absolute. To be initiated by such a preceptor is known as grace. It is, thus, grace that finds its proper expression in and through initiation.

12

The Yoga of Trika Praxis

IT WAS PATAÑJALI who, for the first, gave a systematic shape to such diffused introversive practices that have been given the nomenclature of Yoga. Prior to the composition of the *Yogasūtra* by Patañjali, the diffused yogic practices were being adumbrated by the Upaniṣads as a means of arriving at such a state of experience whereby reality could be experienced at the deepest level of being. The aim of these practices was basically to orient consciousness in such a manner as would lead to its self-absorption and in terms of which any kind of linkage, through the senses, with the external world could be sundered. The new vistas that were opened up by the renunciatory spirituality of śramaṇism intensified the propensity towards inwardness. It had become firm conviction among the seekers of liberation/truth by the time of the composition of the *Yogasūtra* (400 BC) that the wandering of existence from one life to another would continue till the time mind remained attached to what was external to it. It is this kind of apophatic vision towards the world that is responsible in giving rise to the psychology of renunciation, and which the author of the *Yogasūtra* wholeheartedly embraced. It is in the context of this psychological vision that the Upaniṣadic texts arrived at the conclusion that the problem of human condition can be solved only if attention is paid to find out as to how the mind functions or operates. It is upon knowing the nature of the mind that the solution concerning the problem of existential situation of life would be found.

The Upaniṣads had, more or less, tried to understand as to

how mind functions. Upon analysing the operations of the mind, it was found out that the mind is like a wild horse and so is in need to be tamed. It is by taming the mind that the cultivation of the soteric path would become easier and purposeful. Thus it is the ideology of asceticism that would prevail upon all such religious movements that would follow the Great Tradition. However, the roots of this ascetic ideology were brought into focus by such heterodox religious movements as Jainism and Buddhism. Both these religious ideologies came to the conclusion that it is self-effort in terms of ascetical practices that the mind not only could be controlled, but also the soteric goal of liberation could be reached. It is under the impact of this ascetic ideology that the yogic techniques were so devised as would result in the controlling of the operations of the mind. At the very outset the author of the *Yogasūtra* defines the purpose of Yoga as a specific kind of discipline oriented towards the suppression of the operations of the mind. It is through the ascetically oriented techniques that the Yoga system of Patañjali not only wants to control the mind, but also wants thereby to bring about such an inward transformation of consciousness whereby link with the external world is completely cut off. It is upon delinking the contact with the external world that there emerges such a state of self-absorption in terms of which consciousness is enabled to free itself from the contents that it gathers during the period of contact with the world. It is this contentless state of consciousness that is identified with soteric liberation.

In contrast to this ascetically oriented brāhamaṇic path of salvation, there is the tantric way that is completely opposed to any form of asceticism. The *tāntrikas* are of the view that it is of no use to adhere to a practice that is based on self-denial. Instead of self-denial, we are asked to make use of the mind and the body in such a positive or cataphatic manner as would lead us to our goal, which is that of liberation. The tantric way, thus, does not adhere to the ascetic principle of deprivation, viz., of not allowing the senses or the mind to function naturally and spontaneously. Instead Tantrism believes in appeasing the senses and the mind by offering it what it demands. It believes that the mind or the senses, through appeasement, can be satiated to

such an extent whereby unnecessary desires will not be given rise to. It is not, for example, by suppressing our sexual needs that we can transcend the appetite for sensual pleasures. It is by enjoying the sensual pleasures, so believe the *tāntrikas*, that the need for such pleasures can be transcended. It is a view that is based upon the principle that says: Poison kills the poison. It is in the context of such a vision of Tantrism that the use of five forbidden ingredients (*pañca-makāra*-s) has to be understood.

The Trika Śaivism of Kashmir, being tantric in origin and orientation, adheres to the above general framework of Tantrism. It means that the Yoga practices that the Trika system has prescribed are more in tune with Tantrism than with the ascetically oriented Yoga of Patañjali. The first and foremost sign that differentiates the Trika Yoga from that of Patañjali is the rejection of such practices that may be considered as being tortuous. In practical terms it means that the Trika Yoga does not believe in the forceful suppression of the mind nor in such methods of concentration (*dhyāna*) that involve any kind of physical exertion. This differentiating mark between the two forms of Yoga tells its own story, which is that the Yoga of Patañjali is meant only for those who have renounced the world and not for the householders. In contrast to this, the Trika Yoga, being inclusive in nature, is so formulated as to be suitable both for the renunciate monks as well as for the householders. Since the Trika Yoga rejects the ideology of asceticism, it accordingly accepts both the worldly enjoyments (*bhukti*) as well as the attainment of liberation (*mukti*) as valid goals of life. It does not look at the sensual pleasures in opposition to liberation.

This understanding of sensual pleasures as not being opposed to spirituality is based upon the analysis that the desire for the delights of the senses will be lessened to the measure one ascends the spiritual ladder. What it means is this: the desire for sensual pleasures will begin to lessen once the yogi begins to experience the supersensuous bliss of the spirit. This does not mean that a Śaiva yogin is asked not to seek sensual pleasures upon experiencing the bliss of the spirit. He can seek sensual pleasures even after having tasted the flavour of spiritual bliss. This adumbration of sensual pleasures as not being negative or

polluting is rooted in the understanding of a Śaiva yogin who sees his divine self, including the physical apparatus, as being the expression of the sportive activities of the Lord. While looking at the world, and thereby also upon his body-mind complex, as the expression of sportive activity of the Lord, which at the subjective level is but the Self, so for a Śaiva yogin the world itself is seen to be non-different from Paramaśiva. Thus such ascetical or restrictive yogic practices as restraint (*yama*) and discipline (*niyama*) or the withdrawal of senses (*pratyāhāra*) do not constitute the essential aspects of the Trika Yoga. There are certain forms of Trika Yoga, like that of Śāmbhava Yoga, in which introversive practices are minimally used. A practitioner of Śāmbhava Yoga has just to heighten his awareness in terms of which he recognises his self in everything and everything in himself, which, when put in mystical language, means to discover One in the All and All in the One. It is because of the minimal use of introversive practices that Utpaladeva has no compunction in speaking of the Trika system as a path of liberation that is easy and new: *sughatā eṣa mārgo navaḥ* (*Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, 4.1.16).

The central or the most important aspect of Śaiva Yoga is technically called *samāveśa* (submergence) or *āveśa* (penetration). The experience of submergence is such that the practitioner of Śaiva Yoga is suddenly and spontaneously charged with such divine powers in terms of which he practically experiences the "burying" of his finite consciousness into the Universal Consciousness, which is the Ultimate (*anuttara*), and so accordingly has the experience of such divine powers of God as those of omnipresence and omnipotence. This state of "burying" (*samāveśa*) should not be seen as an equivalent to the state of enstasy (*samādhi*) of the *Yogasūtra*. The state of enstasy of the *Yogasūtra*, according to the Trika system, is of the same nature that accrues in a dreamless state (*suṣupti*), whereas the experience of "burying" is identical with such a transcendental state that even transcends the Fourth (*turya*), and so is appropriately named as the state of transcendence (*turyātīta*).

As to when the unique form of Trika Yoga took shape historically is difficult to tell. What can be said with certainty is that the earliest traces of this Yoga are to be found in such tantric

texts as the *Mālinīvijaya-tantra*, *Svacchanda-tantra*, and the *Netra-tantra*. All these texts most probably were composed during the eighth century. If so, it means that, prior to the appearance of these texts, the Trika Yoga must have been, in one form or the other, practised. There are traces of this Yoga to be found even in the Upaniṣads, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is, however, with the appearance of the above tantric texts that the Trika Yoga became available to the public. Whatever practices have been adumbrated in the above tantric texts received further clarity of exposition in the *Śivasūtra* of Vasugupta as well as in the specifically yogic text, namely, the *Vijñānabhairava*. A further development of exposition of the Trika Yoga was carried out by Somānanda in his *Śivadṛṣṭi* as well as by Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa in his *Spandakārikā*. It was, however, left to the genius of Abhinavagupta to collect and analyse the entire material on the Trika Yoga in his *Tantrāloka* that had so far appeared in bits and pieces.

The Trika system of Yoga differs radically from the Yoga of Patañjali insofar as approach to practice is concerned. The Yoga of Patañjali has devised its methods in such a manner as would enable the practitioner to ascend the spiritual ladder from below to the top. The eight limbs (*aṣṭāṅga*-s) that constitute the yogic path of practice are so formulated as would result in the ascension of spiritual ladder in a graduated manner. In contrast to this view, the Trika has formulated its methods of practice in an inclusive manner. Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka* maintains that the practitioner, instead of climbing the ladder from below to top, should directly engage in such spiritual methods that are of superior nature. The individual practitioner should only descend to lower forms of practice if he finds himself incapable of treading the higher spiritual paths. Moreover, the Trika asserts that a spiritual preceptor should see to it as to what kind of practice, superior or inferior, is suitable for his disciple. As each person has its own specific and unique psychological make up, so each individual needs to engage in such a practice that suits him the best. It is for this reason that the Trika has devised varieties of practices so as to provide the necessary wherewithal to every psychological type.

The most superior spiritual path that the Trika has devised is

known as the Yoga of Śiva (*śāmbhavayoga*), which also is known by such names as the Method of Śiva (*śāmbhavopāya*), the Method of Will (*icchopāya*), and the Method of Non-difference (*abhedopāya*). All these nomenclatures are meant to disclose certain characteristic of this path. The practitioner who follows this path arrives at such a spiritual state whereby no mental activity occurs and the mind is allowed to shine forth in its own spiritual glow. The stoppage of mental activity means that the mind, being free from the activity of ideation, abides in itself. The self-abiding of the mind also means freedom from objective cognition, perception and ideation. This freedom allows the mind to go inward and in terms of which it "buries" itself in the psychic light of subjectivity. In the language of the Trika this light is nothing but the light of consciousness, which is but the Self. It is by following this path that the practitioner discovers the pure light of consciousness as being the essential nature of the Self. The duration of the mystical experience that is thus engendered is extended to the measure the period of practice is lengthened. The practice, however, is not of such a nature as would involve physical or mental exertion (cf. *Śivasūtra*, 1.5). It is a state of experience that emerges on account of intuition (*pratibhā*) and not due to the reliance upon the techniques of meditation or upon the performance of ritual. Initially one is asked to make use of such a bodily posture (*āsana*) as would make it easy to turn attention inward. As to what kind of posture should be made use of is explained in the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The practice of posture can be discarded, if one so wishes, once attention terminates in absorption. Through deep absorption is arrived a state whereby the need for any kind of exertion, mental or physical, is completely abandoned, and such a state is the result of *anopāya*, viz., of the Null Method. The Null Method represents such a state whereby the unity of Being as consciousness is spontaneously realised. The realisation of the unity of Being as consciousness means that everything is realised as being identical with one's own self, which also means that one's self is recognised as being identical with everything. This is so because everything is consciousness and consciousness is everything. In the language of Trika theology this experience denotes that

nothing is different from Śiva and every so-called finite category is but Śiva. The realisation of this state of unity of Being is technically known in the Trika system as the state of transcendental unity (*parādvaita*).

The Method of Śiva is such a method in which no physical or mental exertion is involved. The practitioner of this method is asked to make use of such a bodily posture as would result in bringing about complete repose of the mind. A mind that is full of repose would no more be troubled by external or internal agitations, which means that the mind is freed from such activities as would terminate either in assimilation or elimination of ideas, perceptions and cognitions. It is such a still and free mind that abides in its own pure nature, which is nothing else but to be buried in consciousness that is both luminous (*prakāśamayī*) as well as self-referential (*vimarśamayī*).

There is an important aspect of the Method of Śiva that consists of the practice of phonemes and sounds of Sanskrit alphabet. It is a practice in terms of which is visualised the different aspects of the Godhead of *Śiva-tattva* as being represented by the sounds of vowels (*svara*) from *a* to *ḥ* (*visarga*). Insofar as the letters from *ka* to *kṣa* are concerned, they have to be visualised as representing such divine powers through which the Absolute (Paramaśiva) as consciousness manifests itself in the form of the categories of existence (*tattva*-s), viz., from the category of Śakti down to the category of earth. This manifestation of the Absolute as the categories of existence is of the nature of reflection in a mirror. The mutual relationship that occurs between the categories and the letters is that of suggestion (*vyañjana*). To the practitioner (*sādhaka*) these visualised letters and sounds intuitively manifest, through the power of suggestion, that the divine powers that bring about the order of manifestation are but the powers of his own self. These letters and sounds when arranged in a regular order are known as *mātṛkā* or "little mothers."

When "the garland of letters" (*śabda-rāśi*), from *na* to *pha,* are arranged in an irregular manner, they are technically called the *mālinī* or "the garland." It is believed that the visualization of the *mālinī,* in comparison to that of *mātṛkā,* gives quicker results. The use of *mātṛkā* or of *mālinī* in the Method of Śiva is such as

would be impossible to explain or express them in clear terms, because they transcend thought. Since the Method of Śiva is beyond conceptuality, so it is but natural to say that the use of *mālinī* as well as of *mātṛkā* is beyond the scope of understanding. The Trika thinkers have, thus, spoken of the Method of Śiva as an "indeterminate" (*nirvikalpa*) method of self-realisation. Instead of depending upon meditative techniques, the practitioner is asked to make use of his "will" in such a manner as would enable him to enter into the Absolute as consciousness. Once entrance into the Absolute is accomplished, there occurs an upsurge or overflowing of Godhead, which is known as "absorption in Śiva" (*śāmbhava-samāveśa*).

If a practitioner is unable to cultivate the Method of Śiva, he is asked to follow the Method of Energy (*śāktopāya*), which, in descending order, is below it. The Trika system has so formulated its methods of liberation as to include into its ambit every kind of individual. This, however, is not the case with the Yoga system that Patañjali has formulated. Each and every individual is asked to follow and cultivate one and the same path, which consists of eight limbs. It is such a restrictive path that does not take into consideration the variation that exists in the psychological make up of individual beings. The Trika system, on the contrary, does not succumb to this kind of monolithic mistake. It recognises the psychological differences among the individual beings, and while keeping this difference in view, it has formulated its methods of liberation in such a manner as would be possible for each individual to make a choice as to which method suits him the best.

The Method of Energy is meant for such individuals who would like to engage in such practices that are mental in nature, and so this method is also known as the Method of Knowledge (*jñānopāya*). It is such a method in which the nature or essence of the Ultimate is so conceptually conceived as would leave its permanent imprint upon the mind. This feat is achieved when the practitioner repeatedly reminds himself that he is non-different from Paramaśiva, which at the existential level of experience terminates in the cognition that recognises everything as being the reflective appearance of the Self. Since everything is cognised

as the reflective appearance of the Self, it means that everything exists in the Self. Thus the success in this method is dependent as to how creative imagination (*bhāvanā*) is made use of as a method of meditation. Once it is impressed upon the mind, through creative imagination, that everything is Śiva and Śiva is everything, there comes a time when this assertion is transformed into a conviction.

It can, of course, be argued that this method is nothing else but that of autosuggestion. And if so, it would mean that the practitioner of this method, through autosuggestion, hypnotises himself in such a manner as would lead him to the belief that he is none else but Śiva. Such a critique may be valid to the extent if an individual being is simply seen as a psychophysical complex. But if he is viewed as being more than what he appears, then the criticism is not valid. The Trika system agrees with the above criticism to the measure that sees each individual as being subject to the operations of *māyā*. It is *māyā* that deludes us, and delusion is nothing but hypnosis. We are so hypnotised by *māyā* that we have forgotten as to who we really are. It is in the context of this analysis that the use of creative imagination of the Method of Energy has to be seen. The Method of Energy makes use of the technique of *bhāvanā* in order to de-hypnotise the individual from the delusory hypnosis of *māyā*. Once the de-hypnotisation is accomplished, the practitioner of this method accordingly is made to realise the truth concerning his essential nature that he had forgotten on account of the hypnosis of *māyā*. As a method of self-contemplation, the Method of Energy also makes use of such religious acts as *yāga, homa, vrata, japa,* etc. These religious acts are so performed as would lead to their interiorisation. It is the internalisation of these acts that ultimately results in the attainment of the state of the "absorption in Energy" or what is called *śākta-samāveśa*. As to how these acts of self-contemplation have to be internalised is discussed in detail in such texts as the *Tantrāloka, Tantrasāra, Vijñānabhairava,* and *Śivadṛṣṭi*. The practitioner, upon reaching the state of *śākta-samāveśa*, is fit to step into the Method of Śiva or what is called the *śāmbhavopāya*.

Next in descending order to the *śāktopāya* is the Individual Method or the *āṇavopāya*. As the lowest method, it is meant for

those individuals who, as it were, may be considered as the beginners in the path of spirituality. Since much physical and mental exertion is involved in this method on account of its dependence upon external supports, so it is also known as the Method of Action (*kriyopāya*). It is a method of contemplation in which external or objective elements are so visualised as would lead to the conviction of them being non-different from Paramaśiva. The purpose of considering the external elements, through the continuous process of contemplation, as being identical with Paramaśiva is to enable the practitioner to have the experience of the immanent presence of the Lord in creation, viz., in everything that constitutes the universe. There are some elements that are very close to the individual, and also there are elements that are far off from the individual. The nearest element to the self of the individual is the intellect (*buddhi*). Next to the intellect that is near to the self is the principle of animation (*prāṇa*). Next to the principle of animation that is closer, is the body (*deha*). The element that is farther than that of the body is the sound of one's breathing. The element that is farther from the sound of breathing is the phenomenal universe, which consists of space and time and of such elements that exist within space and which are regulated by the sequence of time.

The Individual Method makes use of the intellect for gaining stable concentration (*dhyāna*). The function of the intellect is to grasp or understand what it wants to know. It is through understanding that the knowable is transformed into knowledge. This entire process of gaining knowledge consist of a triad—and in this triad is involved the subject, the object, and the means of knowing. The practitioner of concentrative meditation (*dhyānayoga*) has to visualise this triadic process of knowledge in such a unifying manner as would result in the experience that cognises limitless consciousness as being like a flame that flutters inwardly and outwardly by means of the power of the circle of flames (*śakti-cakra*). This circle of flames of the fire of consciousness is such a divine power that can create, sustain and dissolve the objective elements that are constitutive of the universe. The practitioner has to continue this meditative practice till the time he actually is capable inwardly to create, sustain, dissolve

and absorb anything and everything. The practitioner, upon gaining perfection in this meditative practice of the Individual Method, reaches such a state of absorption that is known as "the limited absorption" or the *āṇavasamāveśa.*

Apart from the concentrative meditation, the Individual Method also makes use of the breathing (*prāṇa*) process in such manner as would lead to perfect mental and physical repose. The principle of animation is said to function in five ways, which correspond to the five states of consciousness. The first two states of consciousness are known those of waking (*jāgrat*) and dreaming (*svapna*). In these two states of consciousness the principle of animation as outgoing breath (*prāṇa*) and incoming breath (*apāna*) functions in terms of assimilation and elimination within the body. The third state of consciousness is that of dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*), which is equated to pure vacuity. It is in this void-like state of consciousness in which are unified outgoing and incoming breaths. As a consequence of this unification of breaths is given rise to "the equalising state" (*samāna*). Once equilibrium is established among the breaths, there then is given rise to "the ascendant state" (*udāna*), which corresponds to the Fourth state (*turya*) of consciousness. It is a state in which every kind of objectivity, whether it be conceptual or perceptual, is devoured, or should we say is reduced to ashes. As a result of the disappearance of objectivity there emerges a state of revelation in terms of which everything is disclosed as being composed of consciousness. Beyond and above the Fourth state is the state of transcendence (*turyātīta*), which is equated to "the pervasive" (*vyāna*) aspect of animation. It is a state in which everything is experienced as being one mass of consciousness, and as such everything shines as consciousness. All these mystical experiences eventuate when the practitioner successfully contemplates the various functions of *prāṇa.* And this entire process of contemplation on the functioning of *prāṇa* is called "the Yoga of animation" or *prāṇayoga.*

This contemplative method of *prāṇayoga,* which also is known as *uccārayoga,* is also used by the practitioner of the Individual Method for the purpose of experiencing, in the order of ascendance, six kinds of bliss. The practitioner of this method

experiences respectively the first two kinds of bliss, known as the *nijānanda* and *nirānanda*, when he makes his self-monad (*puruṣa*) as well as transcendence (*śūnyatā*) as the basis of his contemplation. As a consequence of this contemplation there ensues total relaxation, which gives rise to the above two kinds of bliss. The next form of contemplation is based upon the *prāṇa* and *apāna*, and as a consequence of this contemplation there ensues the bliss that is known as *prāṇānanda*. The remaining three kinds of bliss, which are known as *brahmānanda*, *mahānanda*, and *cidānanda*, come to be when the *samāna*, *udāna*, and *vyāna* forms of *prāṇa* are meditated upon. Finally, the practitioner of this method has the experience of the bliss that is universal, and is accordingly called *jagadānanda*. It is a bliss that may be compared to the overflowing bliss of Paramaśiva that ultimately terminates in the emergence of the universe. Some of the external signs of these mystical experiences are ecstasy (*ānanda*), trembling (*kampā*), drowsiness (*nidrā*), whirling in the head (*ghūrṇī*), etc.

In order to explain briefly as to what these seven types of bliss are, we will have to digress a little, which would mean we would have to wait a little for knowing as to what are the other forms of yoga that constitute the Individual Method. The way to experience the first type of bliss, which is known as *nijānanda*, is to concentrate on the junction between any two points in the heart. As a consequence of this concentration there ensues slowing of the movement of breath, which results in the experience of such dizziness that comes about due to some kind of intoxication. So this dizziness is that of spiritual intoxication. While being dizzy, the aspirant has to remain ever vigilant. It is this state of intoxicated dizziness that is referred to as *nijānanda*, which ultimately terminates in the emergence of *nirānanda*. While persisting in the state of dizziness, there is the danger of falling asleep. The practitioner has to guard against such a happening. While deepening his concentration, there emerges such an experience as if lifeless. The organs refuse to act. The faculty of hearing loses its capacity of hearing anything. Even if the aspirant opens his eyes, he is not aware of his location. After sometime the aspirant begins to hear such sounds that are violent or

thunderous. He also begins to see such shapes and forms that are fearful. If the aspirant, while having these terrifying experiences, persists in this state of absorption, there comes a time when they by themselves, without any effort, disappear. However, the aspirant will have to remain alert insofar as his breathing is concerned. While inhaling and exhaling, he must continue the repetition of the *mantra* that is imparted by the spiritual teacher. It is through such experience that the individual aspirant passes from the state of individuality to that of universality, which is encapsulated by the state of *prāṇānanda.* If the aspirant continues in his practice of breathing as well as continues repetition of the *mantra,* there comes the experience of suffocation. This suffocation in breathing comes about due to the closure of the normal passage of breathing. Instead of nostrils, it is the larynx, called *lambikā,* through which breathing occurs. By changing the old passage of breathing, the breath now is so centralized as if breathing occurs no more. It is this stage of experience that is known as *brahmānanda.* Once one reaches the stage of *brahmānanda,* there ensues the experience of yawning. The yawning expression on the face is of such a type that one finds on the face of a dying person. There is also increase in the intensity of breathing, which the aspirant must bring to an end. The cessation of breathing denotes for the yogi the passing of breath into the central vein called *suṣumaṇā.* From the central vein breath ultimately reaches the mystical centre called the "root-wheel" or *mūlādhāra.* It is the state that is called *mahānanda.* The aspirant, upon reaching the state of *mahānanda,* has to make no exertion. Everything follows automatically. The *prāṇic* force in the *mūlādhāra,* while piercing the mystical centres, reaches its climax in terms of its transformation into *bliss,* which is known as *brahma* and which basically moves from the bottom, viz., from the "root-wheel," to the top of the skull, viz., *brahmarandhra.* This entire process is known as the rising of *cit-kuṇḍalinī,* and accordingly the bliss of this state is known as that of *cidānanda.* Once the bliss of the state of *cidānanda* is attained, the aspirant begins to breathe through the nostrils as well as opens and closes his eyes in a normal manner. This opening and closing of eyes is technically called the *krama-mudrā,* which is equated with the state of

jagadānanda. What it means is that the yogi, whether in the state of contemplation or in the waking state, continuously has the experience of bliss that is of cosmic dimension.

Below *prāṇayoga/uccārayoga* of the Individual Method is the *karaṇayoga*. The term *karaṇa* stands for the physical body along with its nerve centres. This meditative method is meant for such practitioners that are incapable of practising the superior types of contemplation of the Individual Method. It is a method of meditation in which nerve centres are used as the targets of contemplation, and so are included into it such yogic practices that lead to the awakening of the Serpent Power (*kuṇḍalinī-śakti*). Also are used in this method of meditation such *mudrā*-s as those of *khecarī* and *bhairavī*. Also the sounds of Sanskrit alphabet are used as a means of contemplation for the purpose of the disclosure of divine meaning of the alphabets. While making use of these external techniques, the practitioner is simultaneously asked to contemplate inwardly upon the all-pervasive nature of Godhead so as to attain perfect *āṇava-samāveśa*.

If the practitioner discovers that he is incapable of practising even these inferior meditative methods of the Individual Method, he is accordingly asked to meditate upon the two aspects of the external phenomenon, which are the path of time (*kālādhvan*) and the path of space (*deśādhvan*). In order to understand as to what time denotes, we will have to regress a little in order to understand as to how time is conceived in the Trika. It were the Buddhists, particularly the Sautrāntikas, who reduced time to a *kṣaṇa* or moment. The reduction of time to a moment came into being on account of the Buddhist theory of becoming. The Buddhist doctrine of becoming or flux says that everything in the universe lasts only for a moment. The lasting of an entity only for a moment is known as the doctrine of momentariness. This idea of time, as conceived by the Buddhists, had a deep impact upon the Trika thinkers. Time, according to the Trika, is nothing but a succession (*krama*) of events and actions. The minutest unit of time is a moment (*kṣaṇa*). The smallest unit of time exists, when conceived in terms of duration, till thought lasts. It is the smallest units of time that are extended, in terms of calculation, into *muhūrta*, *ghaṭikā*, *prahara*, day and night, week, fortnight,

month and year, and so on. A practitioner of the path of time is asked to meditate repeatedly on these various units of time in such a manner as to have the experience that all of them are contained within the single movement of breath. The practice has to be repeated till the practitioner transcends time. The transcendence of time results in the mystical experience of *āṇava-samāveśa*. It is an experience in terms of which the practitioner is enabled to have the taste of the flavour of eternity (*akāla*) of his Godhead.

Time also is analysed as being gross, fine and subtle. This analysis is carried out through the medium of ideas. We cannot speak of ideas apart from language, and language is nothing but a mass of words. So ideas are but the representations of word-images. The word-images consist of letters, syllables and words, which correspond to the gross, fine and subtle aspects of time as *varṇa, mantra,* and *pada*.

Insofar as space is concerned, it too, like time, is analysed as being gross, fine and subtle. The gross aspect of space is characterised by the various abodes (*bhuvana*-s), and these abodes are made up of various elements (*tattva*-s). It is these elements that are seen as representing the subtle aspect of space. Insofar as elements are concerned, they contain within themselves a number of *kalā*-s, and a *kalā* is the finer aspect of space. The number of *kalā*-s is said to be five. A practitioner of the path of space is asked to meditate on these three aspects of space in such a manner as if they are contained within his own body. Upon gaining sufficient stability in the practice, the practitioner then is asked to creatively use his imagination in such a manner as would lead to the dissolution of the body into life-force (*prāṇa*), of life-force into intellect (*buddhi*), and of intellect into vacuity (*śūnya*), which is equated to the category of self-monad (*puruṣa-tattva*). This meditative practice of dissolution is meant to free the practitioner from the limitations of space, which would denote, when translated into the Trika mystical language, the experience of one's Godhead as being limitless. The three paths of time and the three paths of space, which are termed as being gross, fine and subtle, are jointly known as *ṣaḍādhvan*, viz., the six paths of meditation. This meditative practice, however, does not terminate

in liberation, but enables the practitioner to have the joyful experience of such abodes that are superior to the phenomenal realm. The practitioner, upon gaining sufficient mastery of this meditative practice, is fit to practice either the *karaṇayoga* or the *dhavniyoga.*

The aim of all these techniques that are constitutive of the three *upāya*-s is basically to restructure and replicate the inward experience of self-identity. The experience of identity with the all-pervasive Śiva emerges upon the eradication of the sense of limitation and of difference. It is through the techniques of the *upāya*-s that the status of the Self is recognised as being non-different from the Ultimate (*anuttara*). There occurs, as a result of this recognition, radical transformation concerning the perception of the external world. Now the world is not seen as consisting of finite objects that appear separate and discrete. Instead the objective world as a whole is perceived as having emerged out of consciousness, which means that the so-called objective entities are composed of consciousness. The recognition of the Self as having the status of Śiva results in the realisation of freedom that is non-different from that of Śiva. The realisation of freedom results in the overflowing of bliss in such a manner as would seize the entirety of life of a *siddha.* Thus the goal of a Trika practitioner is fulfilled when he drowns himself in the blissful nectar of Śiva's freedom. Abhinavagupta explains this liberating mystical experience thus:

> The essence of consciousness is freedom, and the essence of that is a mass of bliss. It is for this reason that ritual actions directed towards an attainment of a state of identity and absorption should be carried out employing elements that bring joy to the Heart (*Tantrāloka,* 26.60b-61a).

13

The Five Subjective States of the Embodied Existent

THE TRIKA ŚAIVISM is of the view that the moment the universal supreme consciousness, which is Paramaśiva, initiates the movement of moving downwards in terms of the desire of externalising itself in the form of thirty-six categories, there is eventuated what technically is called the pure path of manifestation (*śuddhādhva*) and the impure path of manifestation (*aśuddhādhva*). Thus all these thirty-six categories are permeated and pervaded by Paramaśiva. Upon condensing itself as the manifest entities, Paramaśiva thereby, as it were, assumes every kind of limitation. It is as a limited being that the subjectivity of the embodied existent is so confined as to remain restricted to the five subjective states, or what is called the states of consciousness. The states are so defined as to reflect human condition as being constituted by limitations. The first state of the embodied existent is such as to remain confined to objectivity in such a manner as to be objectified and in terms of which he loses contact with his subjectivity. In the second state there occur such forms of cognition as would have no touch either with the external objectivity or with the internal subjectivity. In the third state, the embodied existent, while passing through the state of subjectivity, is not at all conscious of his subjectivity. However, in the fourth state the embodied existent experiences the authentic form of consciousness and in terms of which attains identity with it. In the fifth state the limited individual gains such an experience of inwardness as would result in the abiding of the individual in one's subjectivity. These five states, which constitute the subjective

states of the embodied existent, are termed as being the state of waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), deep sleep (*suṣupti*), the Fourth (*turya*), and the state that transcends the Fourth (*turyātīta*).

The state of wakefulness (*jāgrat avasthā*) is such as would solely be directed towards objectivity, which means towards the world that consists of objects, names, forms, words, sounds, etc. In this state consciousness always directs itself towards the object that is out there. As a result of this activity is consciousness able to relate itself to the object towards which it has directed itself. Thus whatever knowledge is obtained in this state is through the process of objectification (*prameya*), which at the practical level of thought denotes that there is no possibility of knowing anything unless consciousness is confronted by the object that is to be known. Thus the source of knowledge that is constitutive of wakeful state is always characterised by difference and in terms of which is affirmed objectivity. Even when consciousness reflects upon itself, it has to so objectify itself as to be the object to itself. As a result of this objectification, there occurs the loss of one's subjectivity. It is because of objectification that the yogis speak of this state as that of *piṇḍasthaḥ*. However, the perfected yogis do not experience objectivity when in the waking state. Instead of objectivity, they view the entire objectivity as being nothing but the expansion (*vikāsa, prasāra*) of Śiva, viz., of supreme consciousness. Thus a true yogi sees the world as being permeated through and through by the presence of Śiva. And on account of this they speak of such an experience as being all-auspicious (*sarvatobhadra*) (*Tantrāloka*, 10.244: *sarvatobhadramāsīnam sarvato vedyasattayā*).

In contrast to the waking state, we have the dreaming state (*svapna avasthā*). It is called the dreaming state because the experiences of this state are negated in the state of waking. In the dreaming state the individual has similar experience of objects as occurs in the waking state. However, the difference between the two lies in the fact that the experience of the dreaming state does not require the presence of objects in the manner they are needed in the state of waking. In spite of the absence of objects, the individual has the experience of events and objects in a non-sequential order. The source of this experience are the impressions (*saṃskāra*-s) that lie in a potent state within. It is

these impressions which, through the process of objectification, present themselves, in the form of a dream, to consciousness. For the yogi this state denotes of being established in the state in which one is *padastham.* It would mean that the state of dreaming is closer to *samādhi* than is the waking state. It is so because there is no such distraction existing in this state as eventuates in the waking state. A yogi thus has the possibility of pervading over everything in this state, and accordingly it is spoken of as the state of pervasion (*vyāpti*).

The state of deep sleep (*suṣupti avasthā*), however, is quite different from the above two states, in that no objective experience of any kind occurs. It is because of this that it is equated to the state of void (*śūnya*). As a result of entering into the state of the void the embodied existent loses touch completely both with objectivity and subjectivity. It is spoken of as the state of void on account of the loss of awareness with regard to both objectivity and subjectivity. It is known as the state of deep sleep to the man-in-the-street on account of the fact that no form of knowledge whatsoever occurs in it. It is a state that is characterized by absolute silence (*tūṣṇīmbhāva*), as it were, of the night. Thus to an ordinary man this state is the symbol of appeasement because of the prevalence of peace. However, this state to a yogi is full of consciousness. It is not a state that can be equated with unconscious state. Since it is filled with consciousness, so a yogi calls it as the state of *rūpastha.* It is so called because a yogi in this state abides in his own-form, which is the Self. It is also known as the state of expansive pervasion (*mahāvyāpti*).

In contrast to these psychosomatic states, there is the state that transcends them—and this state is attained through the process of deep absorption or what may be called the introversion of consciousness. Accordingly is this state termed as the Fourth (*turya*). It is a state in which the individual does not lose himself in the objectivity of waking state or of dreaming state. Nor is it like the void of deep sleep. It is a state of uninterrupted awareness of one's subjectivity in terms of the experience of the Self as being of the nature of illumination (*prakāśamayī*). The state of *turya,* however, is spoken of as *turyātīta* when the yogi gains firm hold in this state. Since in this state is experienced the trans-

cendent, so it is not confined to the limited individual (*pramātṛn*). Accordingly is this state spoken of as being the state of *pramiti* on account of the pervasion of subjectivity without the diffusive agitation that is prevalent in the waking state. It is because of the absence of distraction that this state, instead of calling it as the state of *pramātṛn*, is spoken as that of *pramiti*. Were agitation to be present in this state, then it would no more be the state of *pramiti*. What it means is this: As there is absence of objectivity, so the yogi abides in his own-being (*svarūpa*), which is the Self. It is a state in which the yogi penetrates all the energies that are there. This penetration occurs simultaneously, and not in terms of succession. On account of this it is known as the state of *savyāpārā*. This state is also known as that of *anāmayā* on account of it being free from every kind of defect. The state of *turya* is such as to be beyond description, and so for people in general it just is the Fourth. However, for the yogi it is a state where one just is not only touched by the transcendent, but also is so established in it as to be one with it. And so it is accordingly termed as the state of *rūpātīta*. Upon being established in this state, the yogi experiences the totality of categories as being non-different, viz., as being identical. Thus it is accordingly spoken of as the *pracaya* state, because of the fact that the "multitude" of categories is experienced as being undifferentiated mass of consciousness.

Further it is asserted that each state is present in every other state. This conclusion is arrived at from the perspective of yogic analysis concerning the states of consciousness. The state of wakefulness denotes to the ordinary man what the term really signifies, which is to be awake. Thus to be awake in the state of wakefulness (*jāgrat-jāgrat*) to the man in the street implies of being fully awake insofar as the affairs of the world are concerned. He calls it as wakeful because he carries out the activities of life as well as gathers every kind of empirical knowledge in this state, which is not possible in other states. The yogi, however, considers it as the state of forgetfulness on account of having no possibility of gaining access to the knowledge of the Self. As a result of this the individual is so lost in the world of objectivity that he never even asks the question: Who am I? It is because of this reason

that the yogi speaks of it as being the state of the unawakened (*abuddaḥ*).

The next state concerning wakefulness is that of dreaming while being awake, and so accordingly is this state spoken of as being that of *jāgrat-svapna.* Though one may be awake somatically, there is all the possibility of becoming subject to experiences that are hallucinatory, illusory or just full of reveries. It means that while being awake in the normal sense of the word, there is all the possibility of going through such experiences that are dream-like. It is a state that is linked to daydreaming. For the yogi it encapsulates some kind of awareness, even if it is illusory. It is because of this reason that it is termed as being *buddaḥ-avasthā.* Like daydreaming there is the state of sleep while being awake and such state is called *jāgrat-suṣupti.* It is a state in which the individual loses complete awareness with regard to the objective world as well as with regard to the world that comes about, in the form of dreams, due to the impressions (*saṃskāra*-s) in the mind. It means that the individual has no experience either of the external world or of the mental world of dreams. It is a situation that occurs in deep sleep. For a yogi it denotes the state of the one who is awakened (*prabuddhaḥ*). It is so spoken because it is from the state of *suṣupti* that one enters into the state of the Fourth (*turya*), which is termed as the state of self-abiding. Since the state of deep sleep is close to the state of Fourth, so there is all the possibility of having uninterrupted experience of the Self as being the ground of existence in the waking state. Thus such a state is known as that of *jāgrat-turya.* It is a state that is attained by the fully awakened (*suprabuddhaḥ*). The yogi of this state, while carrying the activities of life in the waking state, remains continuously and constantly aware of the Self as being of the nature of consciousness-bliss (*cidānanda*).

Next to the state of wakefulness is the dream state (*svapna*), which comes about, when in sleep, due to the activation of latent impressions in the mind. The stream of dreaming is similar to the one that occurs in the waking state insofar as experiencing of objectivity is concerned. In the state of dream it is from the mind from which the objects are thrown out, whereas the objects that are experienced in the waking state are already out there, viz.,

outside of consciousness. This is the main difference between the objectivity of the waking state and that of the dream state. However, in both cases it is objectivity that is experienced, and for this reason it is known as the state of *svapna-jāgrat.* In the terminology of the Trika it is given the nomenclature of the state in which objects "come-and-go" (*gatāgata*). Related to the dreaming state is that of *svapna-svapna,* which means to dream while already dreaming. What it signifies is that the sequence of dream is non-sequential, in that there is no logical connection between events and objects in a dream. When one, for example, perceives a pencil in a dream, there, without any reason, emerges also the experience of the object called house. As to why the perception of pencil is followed by that of house cannot logically be accounted. It is so because one is not related to the other. In this manner is established the non-logical content of experiences that occur in the state of dream, and accordingly is such a state of dreaming termed as that of *suvikṣiptam,* viz., diffusive state of consciousness. Then there is the state of *svapna-suṣupti,* viz., the state of deep sleep while dreaming. In such a state there arise occasions when one realizes one is not awake but is dreaming. But this awareness does not last for long. It is momentary. Since awareness is momentary, so the state is known as that of *saṅgatam,* which means to be touched by consciousness. Finally, we have the state of *svapna-turya,* viz., the state of the Fourth while dreaming. There occurs the possibility in the state of dream, even if it is for a moment, of transcending the dream objects by entering into the state of *samādhi,* which is equated with the Fourth state. However, this state of transcendence does not last for long. Since awareness of transcendence is experienced, so the state is appropriately termed as that of *susamāhitam,* viz., of full awareness.

The third empirical state, which is common to all the embodied existents, is that of deep sleep (*suṣupti*). The first state that eventuates in deep sleep is that of waking, which is known as that of *suṣupti-jāgrat.* The state of deep sleep is characterised by non-awareness, and that is why it is equated with the void (*śūnya*). It is a state in which one experiences neither joy nor pain. Also no dream-objects are perceived in this state. It is a state in which

one knows nothing (*na kiñcidjño asmi*), and this one realizes only upon coming out of deep sleep. Usually people, upon coming out from deep sleep, say I had a sound and peaceful sleep. In the language of Trika it is termed as the state of *uditam*, which means such state as would denote rising. It is so spoken because of the negation of impressions that are responsible in actualizing the dream-objects. It is a state of rising because, on the one hand, impressions are negated and, on the other hand, one emerges out of or rises from the state of impressions. Next is the state of *suṣupti-svapna*. When dreaming, one unconsciously or unintentionally gets engaged in one's subjectivity. However, in the state of deep sleep there is total unawareness with regard to both objectivity and subjectivity. Although abiding in subjectivity, yet one is not aware of being in subjectivity. There occurs, however, some kind of awareness with regard to one's subjectivity when in the state of *suṣupti-svapna*. Such experience accordingly is referred to as that of *vipulam*, which means "to be nourished." Next we have the state of *suṣupti-suṣupti*, viz., deep sleep in the state of deep sleep. In this state the faint idea concerning one's subjectivity functions uninterruptedly as the background. Thus is this state known as that of *śāntam*, viz., peaceful. Finally, we have the state of *suṣupti-turya*. This state, from the point of a yogi, encapsulates the continuous awareness of subjectivity as the background for the bliss that is enjoyed in the Fourth. Thus it is spoken of as being the state that is extremely pleasing (*suprasannam*) (cf. *Mālinīvijaya-tantra*, 2.245) because of the bliss that is tasted and enjoyed.

These psychological states have also been explained in relation to the Pratyabhijñā philosophy. For a Pratyabhijñā thinker the *jāgrat-avasthā* or the waking state is such as would result in the externalisation (*bahirvṛtti*) of consciousness, which means of having one's consciousness intentionally directed towards what we call objectivity. To be aware of what is out there simultaneously denotes the deprivation or destitution of awareness with regard to one's subjectivity. It would mean that the waking state corresponds to such a perception of objectivity as would be clear and vivid. Insofar as the state of dreaming (*svapna*) is concerned, it is, according to the Pratyabjiñā thinkers, characterized by

mental constructions (*saṃkalpa-nirmāṇa*), which would mean that it is dominated by thought-constructs and residual impressions. If translated into the language of perception, it would mean that dreaming is equivalent to such perceptions that are unclear and ambiguous. When it comes to the explanation of the state of deep sleep (*suṣupti*), it is explained as being such a state in which there is complete destitution, absence or negation (*pralayopamam*) of thoughts and impressions. In terms of perception it would denote complete absence of objectivity. That which is behind and beyond these states is known as the Fourth. It is a state in which is transcended all the psychological states in terms of the experience of unity of Being—and when this experience of non-difference continues uninterruptedly, then we are in what is called the state of *turyātīta*.

14

The Text of the Śivasūtra

As the *Śivasūtra*, or *The Aphorisms of Śiva,* is the foundational text of Trika Śaivism, so accordingly its adherents consider it to be of divine origin, and thereby accord it the status of revelation. A text, theologically speaking, that is of divine origin, and is of the nature of revelation, is thought to be eternal, and as such is transcendent to all that that is phenomenal, viz., is non-originate. It amounts to saying that a revealed text has necessarily to be ahistorical and atemporal. The divine origin, or non-historicity, of a revealed text does not mean that it is totally immune to the vagaries of time. Whatever be the theological interpretation concerning a revealed text, we know this much that such a text exists in time and space and is communicated in a language that humans speak and utter. Even though a revealed text may have a divine origin, yet it is transmitted in a mode of language that has a definite historical origin, and so may be said to be finite. It is in the context of this reasoning that the authorship of the text of the *Śivasūtra* is ascribed to sage Vasugupta. In theological terms the text may have been revealed by Śiva to Vasugupta, yet, from a historical point of view, the text owes its existence to a definite historical person, namely, to Vasugupta. Insofar as the mode of revelation is concerned, there are various accounts, about which we shall be dealing below. Whatever the account of revelation may be, it has to be of mythic origin, as such accounts occur outside of human history. Moreover, mythic accounts always deal with that that is supernatural. Concerning the life of Vasugupta we know very little. We know, however, this much that he was the spiritual

preceptor of Kallaṭabhaṭṭa who, according to Kalhaṇa, was not only a *siddha*, but also adorned the court of King Avantivarman.[1] As Avantivarman reigned between 855 and 883 AD, so Vasugupta must have lived during the first-half of the ninth century.

From the analysis of the text of the *Śivasūtra* we come to know that Vasugupta was a yogi of a very high order. As a recluse yogi, he seems to have preferred the life of a hermit. As the revelatory spot of the text is believed to have been the Mahādeva Mountain, so it is natural to infer that Vasugupta must have lived in this mountain or down below in the valley. The place has its own natural charm and beauty. As a place of solitude, it is very suitable for mendicants or for those who desire to delve deep into the mysteries of existence. As Vasugupta was both a mendicant yogi as well as a philosopher, so the Mahādeva Mountain seems to have suited him the best. In such a place he could, without any disturbance, pursue his spiritual praxis as well as philosophical reflection.

There are various traditions to be found concerning the mode of revelation of the *Śivasūtra*. Whatever be the tradition, the aim is to establish, beyond doubt, the revelatory character of the text of *Śivasūtra*. Since the goal is supermundane, so the description of revelation has to be such as would authenticate its divine character. This is accomplished by inserting the direct involvement of a divine character in the form of a deity. In our case it is Śiva who, according to Śaivas, is the Supreme Being, or what the theists would call God. In order to give a non-logical character to the entire operation of revelation, it is necessary to resort to myth, as myth never operates within the realm of logical reasoning. That which is supernatural has to be beyond causality, and so beyond human reasoning.

There are various traditions to be found concerning the mode of revelation of the *Śivasūtra*. As these traditions, in one way or the other, concern themselves with authenticating the divine character of the text, so the accounts are bound to contradict each other. What may, at the empirical level of thought, be seen as a logical inconsistency, is resolved, at the transcendent level, into a kind of spiritual sameness that is rooted in such supernatural order that is non-contradictory. It is at the transcendent level of

spiritual experience that all opposites and polarities coincide or are subsumed in the unity of Being. As the empirical law of contradiction is inapplicable to that that is transcendent, so the transcendent necessarily has to be free of contradictions. Accordingly the mythic accounts of revelation, when seen from a transcendent perspective, do not contain logical contradictions because of having gone beyond empirical thinking. What this means is this: We must never apply the empirical yardstick in measuring the correctness or incorrectness of that that is supernatural. Supernatural *a priori* transcends the natural, and so axiomatically can never be comprehended through the methods of reasoning. It is for this reason that the transcendent has always been spoken of as ineffable or *mysterium*. The transcendent, thus, has appropriately been termed as being of the nature of wonder (*camatkāra*) or amazement (*vismayātmaka*).

There are, as already pointed out, various traditions concerning the mode of revelation of our text, namely, the *Śivasūtra*. One of them owes its existence to Kallaṭabhaṭṭa. Kallaṭa was not only a direct disciple of Vasugupta, but was himself an accomplished yogi. The tradition that stems from him maintains that Vasugupta had a dream on Mahādeva Mountain. While in dream, Śiva himself is said to have appeared to him. Further the tradition asserts that Śiva transmitted the entire text of the *Śivasūtra* to Vasugupta during the dream-period. Whether it is possible for a person to remember the entire text that has been imparted in dream is a question that can never be answered reasonably. As it is a matter of faith, so the mythic element is inserted in order to heighten the supernatural dimension of revelation. The mythical element is made use of for strengthening the faith of the adherent. Also myth has the power of describing the operations of the supernatural in terms of wonder.

There is an another tradition concerning the transmission of the secret teachings of the *Śivasūtra*. Rājānaka Rāma and Bhagavadutpāla have initiated this tradition in their respective commentaries on the *Spandakārikā*, or *The Stanzas on Vibration*. This line of tradition received further impetus from Bhāskara in his commentary on the *Śivasūtra*, namely, the *Śivasūtravārttika*.[2] This tradition does not subscribe to the view that Śiva directly

transmitted the text to Vasugupta in a dream. Rather the tradition asserts the direct authorship of the text to Śiva. Vasugupta is supposed to have learnt the text of the *Śivasūtra* from some Siddha on Mahādeva Mountain. The relationship that occurs between the revealer of the text and the disciple, according to Bhagavadutpāla, is of human nature precisely because it is of the same nature that exists between a yogi and an ordinary person.[3]

There is a third tradition concerning the authorship of the *Śivasūtra*. This tradition stems from Kṣemarāja's commentary, namely, the *Vimarśinī*, on the *Śivasūtra*. Vasugupta, according to Kṣemarāja, was a Siddha who lived on the Mahādeva Mountain. As a perfect yogi (*siddha*), he had immersed himself in sound traditions, and consequently had rejected such spiritual ways and methods that were inferior, which meant, from a doctrinal viewpoint, the rejection of such Buddhist methods as represented by men like Nāgabodhi.[4] It is asserted that one night Śiva supposedly appeared in a dream to Vasugupta. While in dream, Śiva told him to search for a rock on the Mahādeva Mountain. Further he was informed that on the other side of the rock he would find the text of the *Śivasūtra* inscribed. Upon coming out of dream, Vasugupta went to the prescribed spot. On reaching the spot, he found a huge boulder. The boulder turned over when he touched it. What a wonderful experience Vasugupta might have had upon discovering the text of *Śivasūtra* inscribed on it.[5] Kṣemarāja, too, explains the origin of the text in mythic terms. In this manner he, too, follows the time-tested theological tradition concerning the supernatural. How else could one explain the divine origin of a text except by linking it to mythic thinking. It is this tradition concerning the discovery of the text of the *Śivasūtra* that is very common and popular among the Kashmiri Pandits. The Mahādeva Mountain is still thought to be a sacred place by the faithful on account of it being the place where Śiva is supposedly to have revealed the text of the *Śivasūtra*. Although the said rock is still existing at the prescribed spot, but there is no trace of the text to be found on the rock.

Insofar as the text of the *Śivasūtra* that has come down to us is concerned, it consists of two recensions, which differ slightly from each other. Bhāskara has commented on one of them and

Kṣemarāja has commented on the other. The recension upon which Bhāskara has commented contains 79 *sūtras* or aphorisms, whereas that of Kṣemarāja's has 77 *sūtras*. The variation exists on account of the division of one *sūtra* into two and the addition of an extra one, which is absent in Kṣemarāja's version. The approach to the text of both the commentators differs radically from each other, and so one is compelled to arrive at the conclusion that they represent two different commentorial traditions. Whatever the differences between the two traditions may be, both of them divide the text into three sections, and thereby affirm that the tradition of dividing the text must have its origin in Vasugupta itself. The three sections of the text, according to Bhāskara, are the following:

1. Explanation concerning the nature of the light of the universal consciousness (*sāmānyacitprakāśasvarūpanirūpaṇa*)
2. The emergence of innate knowledge (*sahajavidyodaya*)
3. The vibration of the powers (*vibhūtispanda*)

The division of the content of the text is made by keeping in view the soteric methods that are employed for the attainment of soteric liberation. Kṣemarāja has named the three sections of the text thus:

1. The essential nature of one's own vibration (*svarūpaspanda*)
2. The emergence of the vibration of innate knowledge (*sahaja-vidyodayaspanda*)
3. The vibration of the powers (*vibhūtispanda*)

These headings of Kṣemarāja parallel those of Bhāskara. The headings of the text into three sections, according to the commentators, must be been seen in the context of the relationship that exists between the texts of the *Śivasūtra* and the *Spandakārikā*. As to what kind of relationship exists between these two texts will be analysed at an appropriate place. It is immaterial as to whether the *Spandakārikā* was composed by Vasugupta or by Kallaṭa, or whether the former is a commentary on the latter. What is of importance is the fact that the two texts, in one way or the other,

are related to each other. And all the commentators affirm that the two texts are related to each other. Accordingly Bhagavadutpāla testifies to this relationship in his commentary on the *Spandakārikā*, namely, the *Spandapradīpikā*. According to him, the *Spandakārikā* contains, in a capsule form, the secret teachings that Vasugupta put down in the *Śivasūtra*.[6] Rājānaka Rāma maintains similar view in his *Spandakārikāvivṛti*.[7] Although ascribing the authorship of the *Spandakārikā* to Vasugupta, Kṣemarāja maintains that he wrote this text in order to summarise the teachings of the *Śivasūtra*.[8]

Bhāskara, too, maintains that the above two texts are intimately related to each other. It would be a mistake, according to him, to think of the *Spandakārikā* as a mere synopsis or gist of the secret teachings of the *Śivasūtra*. Rather he looks at the *Spandakārikā* as a full-fledged commentary of Kallaṭa on the first three sections of the *Śivasūtra*. Bhāskara also affirms that Kallaṭa wrote a separate commentary, called *Tattvārthacintāmaṇi*, on the fourth section of the *Śivasūtra*. This commentary, however, is no more available. Abhinavagupta supports this viewpoint of Bhāskara. According to him, Kallaṭa wrote two separate commentaries on the *Śivasūtra*, namely, *Madhuvāhinī* and *Tattvārthacintāmaṇi*.[9] As to whether Kallaṭa wrote such commentaries on the *Śivasūtra* might be inferred from the fact that Abhinava quotes from them. As the quotations do not constitute the part of the body of the text of the *Spandakārikā*, so they must necessarily belong to the commentaries that Kallaṭa is supposedly to have written on the *Śivasūtra*.[10]

Even though all the commentators may have affirmed their strong affiliation to the two texts, yet it is not clear in what sense this intimacy between the *Śivasūtra* and the *Spandakārikā* exists. The *Spandakārikā* cannot definitely be seen as a commentary on the *Śivasūtra* nor can it be said that both the texts are dependent upon each other. The relationship between the two texts can easily be established if the *Śivasūtra* is seen as the first exposition of Trika Śaivism of Kashmir. It is the Trika form of monistic Śaivism that may be viewed as the supreme synthesis of all the currents of thought that preceded or succeeded the *Śivasūtra*.[11]

This synthesis reached its climax in the syncretistic thought of Abhinavagupta.

Although the tradition may think that the two texts—*Śivasūtra* and the *Spandakārikā*—are closely related, yet it cannot be denied that the *Śivasūtra* in itself does not belong to any particular school. As the *Śivasūtra* is considered to be a revealed text, so it must belong to that corpus of Śaiva literature that has come to be known as the *Āgamaśāstra*.[12] In contrast to the *Śivasūtra*, the *Spandakārikā* is not given the status of being a revelatory text. Moreover, this text is seen as the source of a specific doctrinal school, namely, the school of *Spanda*.[13] Even though the *Spanda-kārikā* is considered as a commentary on the *Śivasūtra*, yet it is seen "to be the Bible of the *Spanda* system, whereas the *Śivasūtra* is concerned with *Trika* in general." As the source of a new doctrine, the *Spandakārikā*, therefore, must be viewed as a new doctrinal development in terms of which it may be distinguished from the *Śivasūtra*. The overall impression that one derives from the *Spandakārikā* is that a specific doctrinal system is being established within the new metaphysical framework. Most of the technical terms, like *vikāsa, svabhāva, unmeṣa,* and *spanda,* are totally absent from the text of the *Śivasūtra*. Technical terms like radiance (*sphurattā*), wave (*urmī*), strength (*bala*), essence (*sāra*), heart (*hṛdaya*) are, according to Kṣemarāja, to be found in such tantric texts that were composed prior to the composition of the *Śivasūtra*. All these terms are equivalent to what the term *spanda* signifies.[14] There is an another term, namely, *ghūrṇī,* which, though denoting the rolling of eyes in the state of inebriation, in the context of *Spanda* doctrine signifies the state of blissful enjoyment, which comes to be upon realizing the infinite nature of consciousness as being nothing else but vibration. Consequently, it pours out into what is called the manifest order, viz., the universe. Utpaladeva, while offering praise to Śiva, speaks of the ecstasy that *ghūrṇī* denotes thus:

> Making yourself radiantly manifest, you make all things unfold and contemplating our (own-) form, you contemplate the universe. As you pulsate blissfully (*ghūrṇase*), inebriating yourself with the

> juice of the aesthetic delight of your own nature (*nijarasa*), the phenomenal world emerges into manifestation.[15]

According to the Tantras, the taste or flavour of the final spiritual state is linked to the state that occurs when one is totally drunk or inebriated. As the *kuṇḍalinī*, through certain mystical centres in the body, rises upward, there occur a number of experiences, which are said to be five in number. And they are delight (*ānanda*), a leap (*udbhava*), a tremor (*kampā*), sleep (*nidrā*), and pulsation (*ghūrṇī*).[16]

All the monistic Śaiva thinkers of Kashmir, including Vasugupta, consider the Tantras as the most authoritative texts concerning the experiences that are considered to be conducive towards liberation. Since the Tantras as well as the *Spandakārikā* speak of the liberating experience as being of the nature of pulsation, it is, therefore, surprising that no mention of this experience is to be found in the *Śivasūtra*. The *Śivasūtra*, like the *Spandakārikā*, is not inclined to view the ultimate reality as being of pulsating nature. The text makes use of such terms as *ātman* or *caitanya* to describe reality. These discrepancies between the two texts, however, do not mean that they have nothing in common. There are many metaphysical notions that both the texts share in common. Both of them are equally concerned with the psychological experiences, namely, waking, dreaming and deep sleep, which are contained in the Fourth (*turya*), the higher state of consciousness.[17] Both of them speak of the liberating experience as being of the nature of wonder (*vismaya*).[18] Both think of *mantra* as a mental activity, and thereby *mantra* is seen to be belonging to the realm of the mind. Either of the text offers analyses concerning the liberating as well as the obscuring forces within, and on account of which speech, whether spoken or mental, is made possible. It is on account of speech, which is innate to consciousness as reflective awareness, that consciousness knows itself as well as becomes manifest.[19] Both the texts think that the knowledge that is acquired through mental representation is of inferior quality; it is a knowledge that binds one to the bondage of *saṃsāra*. In contrast to this knowledge, we have a knowledge that is liberating, and this knowledge comes directly from conscious-

ness. In the *Śivasūtra* specific attention is paid to these two forms of knowledge. A yogi who has direct, immediate or non-mediate knowledge becomes the Lord of the Wheel of Energies (*śakticakra*).[20] The Wheel of Energies is a collectivity of powers of Śiva. It is through these powers that Śiva operates in the objective, subjective and cognitive realms. The bound individual is a victim of these powers on account of him being unable to control them. Equally the *Spandakārikā* thinks of liberation as being equivalent to the mastery over these powers (*cakreśvaratvasiddhi*). The mastery over these powers is seen in terms of one's identification with Śiva precisely because He is the Master of the Wheel.[21]

From this analysis of the two texts we can safely assume that the *Spandakārikā* represents a new development insofar as metaphysical thinking is concerned. In order to establish this new metaphysical development the texts makes use of new terms which, through commentatorial tradition, gave rise to what has come to be known as the Doctrine of Vibration or *spanda*. The commentators of the text support this view, and accordingly Rājānaka Rāma speaks of *spanda* as an autonomous school of philosophy (*siddhānta*). Even Abhinava speaks of it in terms of *spanda* teachings (*spandaśāsana*).[22] Kṣemarāja, too, thinks of it as a branch of knowledge (*śāstra*) in its own right. From this analysis it may be concluded that the *Spandakārikā* represents an attempt at developing a new metaphysical understanding of reality. It does it without borrowing technical terms from other Śaiva schools. Further it can be said that the *Spandakārikā* emerged from the crucible of the *Śivasūtra* in a manner as would allow it to lay down the foundation, without hurting the overall perspective of the latter text, of an independent philosophical school. And in this venture the *Spandakārikā* has been successful.

References

1. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, 5.66.
2. See Rājānaka Rāma, *Spandavivṛti*, p.1; Bhagavadutpāla, *Spanda-pradīpikā*, p.1; Bhāskarācārya, *Śivasūtravārttika*, p. 2.
3. Bhagavadutpāla, op. cit., p. 2.
4. See Jean Naudou, *The Buddhists of Kashmir*. Delhi, 1980.

5. Kṣemarāja, *Śivasūtravimarśinī*, pp. 4–5; *Spandanirṇaya*, pp. 1–2.
6. Bhagavadutpāla, op. cit., p. 1.
7. Rājānaka Rāma, op. cit., p. 3.
8. Kṣemarāja, *Śivasūtravimarśinī*, p. 5; *Spandanirṇaya*, pp. 1–2.
9. Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*, vol. 2, p. 30.
10. See N. Rastogi, *The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir*, vol. 1. Delhi, 1979, p.115.
11. Ibid., p.1.
12. See Jaideva Sing's Introduction to *Śivasūtravimarśinī*. Delhi, 1979, p.1.
13. Rastogi, op. cit., p. 116.
14. Kṣemarāja, *Spandasandoha*, p.5.
15. Utpaladeva, *Śivastotrāvalī*, 13.15.
16. *Mālinīvijaya-tantra*, 11.25; *Spandakārikā*, vv. 23–25.
17. *Śivasūtra*, 1.7–11; *Spandakārikā*, vv. 45–48.
18. Ibid., 1.12; ibid., vv. 26–27.
19. Ibid., 1.3; 2.7; 3.20, 28; ibid., vv. 45–48.
20. *Śivasūtra*, 1.22.
21. *Spandakārikā*, v. 51.
22. Abhinavagupta, *Tantrāloka*, 3.281; 8.6; 23.40.

15

The Text of the Spandakārikā

THE TEXT OF the *Spandakārikā*, or the *Stanzas on Vibration*, is so short a tract as to just consists of fifty-two verses. The purpose of writing such short philosophical or theological tracts seems to have been to generate such a pedagogical method of learning whereby the content of the text could be learnt as well as memorised easily. The earliest example of such a tract is the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* which, through the passage of time, seems to have gained popularity among the literary circles of Kashmir. It may be under such an influence that the composition of the *Spandakārikā* was undertaken. The verses of the text do not simply deal with a particular theological topic, but show a deep concern of bringing about logical cohesion among the disparate yogic practices within the overall framework of the doctrine of *spanda* or vibration, which is considered as constituting the essential nature of reality. The view of reality as being of vibratory nature may be contrasted with the view that looks at reality as being passive. It is this concept of reality as being vibratory that facilitated the passage for giving rise to new philosophical terms that would delineate such a form of non-dualism that would have a theistic orientation. This theistically oriented non-dualism would ultimately find its fullest expression in the Trika philosophical school known as Pratyabhijñā. Such philosophical orientation became possible for the author of the *Spandakārikā* to adopt on account of the tantric background of Śaivism that was given, for the first time, a proper theological as well as philosophical expression in the text of the *Śivasūtra*.

The text of the *Spandakārikā* is written in such a poetic style as if composed by a poet par excellance. Accordingly Bhagavadutpāla speaks of the author of the text as a poet of great merit. If the text is treated as poetry, then we will have to presume that it contains suggested meaning, which means that we will have to delve deep in order to understand the exact spirit of the text.

The earliest example that one could find of a tract of such genre that is brief and small in size in Kashmir is that of *Ādhārakārikā*, or the *Stanzas of Sage Ādhāra.* This text originally expounded the basic principles of Vaiṣṇavism. Abhinava was so charmed by the brevity and the style of the text that he so transformed it as to be used as the basis for expounding the concepts of the Trika non-dualism. While transforming it into a monistic Śaiva tract, Abhinava accordingly composed the text of the *Paramārthasāra*, viz., *The Essence of Ultimate Reality*, in which he set to explain in one hundred *ārya* verses the essence of Trika thought and practice. The other early examples one could find are the two tracts of Sadyojyoti, namely, the *Stanzas on Liberation* (*Mokṣakārikā*) and the *Stanzas on Worldly Enjoyment* (*Bhogakārikā*). In these two tracts Sadyojyoti outlines the basic theological principles of the dualist Śaivasiddhānta. It is in the light of this literary tradition that the monistic Śaivas too composed some such tracts as would explain briefly the fundamental principles of Trika. In addition to the above examples of *Spandakārikā* and *Paramārthasāra*, the most important philosophical tract that has been written in this style is the *Stanzas on the Recognition of God* (*Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*) of Utpaladeva, which enunciates the fundamental doctrines of the monistic Śaiva school, known as the Recognition School (*pratyabhijñāvāda*). The text was composed almost one hundred years after the *Spandakārikā.* These two texts gained such a great prominence among the monistic Śaivas of Kashmir that various commentaries, with the passage of time, were written on them. Also both the texts were responsible in giving rise to two philosophical schools of thought, which derive their name from them.

The reason that is given concerning the title of our text is the following. Kṣemarāja, one of the commentators of the text, tells us that the *Spandakārikā* is given such a nomenclature because it

expounds the doctrine of vibration, which essentially is one's nature (*svabhāva*). This vibratory nature is non-different from that of Śiva, which, as ultimate reality, is the foundation of what we are. Śiva as ultimate reality is nothing but the pulsating radiance (*sphurattā*) of consciousness. As Śiva is nothing but consciousness, so the pulsating radiance of consciousness is but its energy (*spanda-śakti*).[1] Rājānaka Rāma offers similar argument concerning the title of the text. He maintains that the text is so spoken because it expounds the basic principles of *spanda* or vibration. Vibration, according to him, is a subtle stir as well as the supreme power of consciousness, which is but the essential nature of one's own-being (*sva-svabhāva*). Accordingly this stir as the manifestation of the supreme power is termed as the actual attribute (*dharma*) of reality, which is Śiva.[2]

There is a real confusion both among the traditional commentators as well as modern scholars with regard to the actual authorship of the *Spandakārikā*. There are some scholars who think that Kallaṭa is the real author of the text, and the scholars who adhere to this view are J.C. Chatterjee,[3] Kaw,[4] and B.N. Pandit.[5] There are also scholars, like Pandey[6] and Gnoli,[7] who hold an opposite view. According to them, it was Vasugupta himself who composed the text of the *Spandakārikā*. Since the question of authorship of the text has not so far been settled, we shall not waste any more time on this question. What, however, should concerns us here is the fact that a new theological school of thought came into being, which gave a new direction to Trika Śaivism.

The text of the *Spandakārikā* holds a special and unique place in the history of Trika Śaivism. This is evidenced by the fact that a number of commentaries have been written upon it. The earliest commentary is that of Kallaṭa. The short commentary he wrote on the text is called the *Essence of Vibration* (*Spandasarvasva*). This commentary is commonly known as *vṛtti*, indicating thereby that the commentary is meant to be a brief gloss, so that the meaning of the text may be clarified without any elaboration. Even though the commentary may be brief, yet it is written in a style that is discursive, and so may be seen as a basic tool in understanding the fundamental doctrinal principles of *spanda*.

Even though the Kashmiri authors speak of Kallaṭa with respect and reverence in their works, yet we know little about his personal life. What we definitely know about him is that he adorned the court of Avantivarman (855–83). Kalhaṇa speaks of him as an accomplished yogi (*siddha*).[8] Further we know from his title—*bhaṭṭa*—that he was a brahmin by birth. As a man of learning, he took deep interest in different branches of knowledge. He had, apart from Vasugupta, various other teachers who taught him poetics and literary criticism. Accordingly, Bhagavadutpāla speaks of Kallaṭa as a poet of great merit.[9]

Unlike Vasugupta, he led a life of a householder. He had a son by the name of Mukula. Mukula was a great authority on poetics. Some of the works that Mukula wrote on poetics are *Alaṅkārodāharaṇa*, *Vivahātattvānusmaraṇa*, and the *Abhidhāvṛtti-mātṛkā*. Bhaṭṭendurāja, the teacher of Abhinava in poetics, learnt the basics of poetry from Mukula. Thus we have a direct line of teachers in poetics from Kallaṭa to Abhinavagupta via Mukula and Bhaṭṭendurāja.

As to whether Kallaṭa wrote the text of the *Spandakārikā* is an unsolved question. He, however, wrote a commentary, called *Vṛtti*, on this text. Two of his other texts, which are supposed to have been his commentary on the *Śivasūtra*, are the *Madhuvāhinī* and the *Tattvārthacintāmaṇi*. The other works he wrote are the *Tattvavicāra* and the *Svasvabhāva-saṃbodha*.

The other commentator on the *Spandakārikā* is Rājānaka Rāma. The commentary he wrote on this text is called the *Vivṛti*, or the *Extensive Explanation*. Rājānaka Rāma is also known by various other names. Mostly he is known as Rāmakaṇṭha. Also he is known by such names as Śrīrāma, Rājānaka Rāma, or Rājānaka Rāma-kaṇṭha. As there are two other Rāmakaṇṭhas, who were Śaiva-siddhāntins, so we shall, in order to avoid confusion, call our author simply as Rājānaka Rāma. Rājānaka Rāma was a direct disciple of Utpaladeva, and so he must have been a contemporary of Lakṣmaṇagupta. Lakṣmaṇagupta, too, was the disciple of Utpaladeva as well as the teacher of Abhinava. All this amounts to saying that Rājānaka Rāma must have lived during the first-half of the tenth century.

Very little is known about the life of Rājānaka Rāma. If he is the very person who wrote the commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, called *Sarvatobhadra*, then from one of the concluding verses of this commentary we come to know that he was a Kashmiri brahmin belonging to the lineage (*gotra*) of Kaṇṭha Dhaumyāyana.[10] Also Rājānaka Rāma tells us that he had a brother by the name of Mukṭakana. Some scholars have identified him with the great poet Mukṭakana. Even Kalhaṇa speaks of Mukṭakana as a great poet.[11] Whether Mukṭakana of Kalhaṇa is identical with the brother of Rājānaka Rāma is a question that needs to be explored. Whatever be the case, what is of importance is that Rājānaka Rāma came from a talented family of scholars.

As the *vṛtti* of Kallaṭa on the *Sapandakārikā* needed an extensive commentary, so Rājānaka Rāma took up the task of writing a detailed commentary. Unlike Kṣemarāja, he has divided his commentary into four sections. The first section is called *vyatirikopapattinirdeśa,* and consists of sixteen verses. The aim of this section is to establish, through sound argument, the existence of the universal Self, which is seen to be independent of both mind and body. The existence of the Self is arrived at through intuitive awareness. The second section is called *vyatiriktasvabhāvopalabdhi,* and consists of eleven verses (17–27). Th aim of this section is to prove that the Self, who is eternal and is the ground of all phenomenal existence, must ultimately be cognised through direct perception (*upalabdhi*). The third section is called *viśvasvabhāvaśaktyupapatti.* This section consists of three verses (28–30). The previous two sections deal with the transcendent nature of Śiva, which is seen essentially to be identical with one's own nature (*svasvabhāva*). In contrast to the above two sections, this part of the commentary deals with the immanent nature of Śiva. The immanence of Śiva manifests itself through the circle of divine powers (*śakticakra*) that constitute the diversity of the world. The world of phenomenon, thus, is nothing but the self-manifestation or emission of Śiva, which, in philosophical terms, means that there is no essential difference between ultimate reality and that which is considered to be phenomenal. The fourth section, which consists of twenty-one verses (31–51), is called *abhedopalabdhi.* The purpose of this section is to explain how a yogi can realize

the essential identity between himself and Śiva. The realization of this identity terminates in what is called liberation from bondage. Also are discussed the conditions that cause bondage as well as the powers that a yogi attains through the various states of consciousness.

The third important commentator of the *Spandakārikā* is Bhagavadutpāla. He, however, should not be confused with Utpaladeva of *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*. Other commentator was a Vaiṣṇava, and so accordingly has been called Utpala Vaiṣṇava.[12] As a Vaiṣṇava, he has referred to Vaiṣṇava works in his commentary, called the *Pradīpikā*, on the *Spandakārikā*. Although a Vaiṣṇava, he seems to have adhered to the Spanda School of Philosophy. He belonged to a brahmin family. His father, Trivikrama, resided at Nārāyaṇasthāna. He also speaks of his maternal great-grandfather as being Mahābala.[13] Mahābala is believed to have written a work called *Rahasyastotra*.

As we are not certain as to when exactly Bhagavadutpāla lived, so we have to make conjectures concerning his time. There is a view that tells us that Lakṣmaṇadeśikendra, the author of the *Śāradātilaka*, is none other than the disciple of Utpaladeva,[14] who taught the Pratyabhijñā philosophy to Abhinavagupta. Lakṣmaṇadeśikendra tells us that he is third in line from certain Mahābala. From this particularly Rastogi concludes that this Mahābala is none other than the great-grandfather of Bhagavadutpāla.[15] If this is the case, then the following conclusion may be drawn:

If this picture is correct, then it would mean that Bhagavadutpāla must precede Abhinavagupta no more than by one generation, which means that he must have lived by the second-quarter of tenth century.[16] This view concerning the time of Bhagavadutpāla is further confirmed if the following facts are taken into consideration. What we can, with certainty, say is this: Bhagavadutpāla must have either been a contemporary or lived after Utpaladeva of *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*. This view is based upon the assumption that Bhagavadutpāla quotes from the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* of Utpaladeva.[17] If this is the case, then Bhagavadutpala must have lived a generation before Abhinavagupta, which means that he must have lived in the middle of the tenth century.

The other great commentator, who has commented upon the *Spandakārikā*, is Kṣemarāja. Kṣemarāja was not only an outstanding student of Abhinavagupta, but was also an outstanding writer. Whether it is this very Kṣemarāja to whom Abhinava speaks of as his cousin and student is difficult to affirm. If Kṣemarāja is accepted as the cousin of Abinavagupta, then his father must have been Vāmadeva, the uncle of Abhinava. As a contemporary of Abhinavagupta, Kṣemarāja must have lived during the last quarter of the tenth century and first half of the eleventh century. Apart from Abhinavagupta, he had many teachers, and one of them was Prayāga.[18] Kṣemarāja seems to have come under the influence of the Spanda School of Thought, and this is evidenced by his commentaries on the *Śivasūtra* and *Spandakārikā*.

Apart from the above commentaries, there seems to have been a number of other commentaries, which, according to Kṣemarāja, were neither good nor consistent with the tradition. These inappropriate commentaries, which are no more available, led Kṣemarāja to write an exhaustive commentary on the *Spandakārikā* so that the webs of mental confusion could be removed, which he attempted to do in his two commentaries, namely, *Spandanirṇaya* and *Spandasandoha*.

References

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2. Rājānaka Rāma, *Spandakārikāvivṛti*, p. 4.
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4. R.K. Kaw, *The Doctrine of Recognition*, Hoshiarpur, 1967, p. 261.
5. B.N. Pandit, *Kashmir Śaiva-darśana*, Jammu, 1973, p. 26.
6. K.C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, Varanasi, 1968, pp. 156–57.
7. R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*, Varanasi, p. xviin2.
8. Kalhaṇa, *Rājataraṅginī*, 5.66: "In the time of Avantivarman the illustrious Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa and other holy men (*siddha*-s) descended to the earth for the benefit of people."
9. Bhagavadutpāla, *Spandapradīpikā*, p. 13.
10. Rāmakaṇṭha, *Sarvatobhadra*, p. 10.

11. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, 5.34.
12. *Spandapradīpikā*, p. 7.
13. Ibid., p. 13.
14. *Śāradātilaka*, 25.83–86.
15. N. Rastogi, *The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir*, p. 130.
16. Ibid., p. 152.
17. K.C. Pandey, op. cit., p. 152.
18. Ibid., p. 254.

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The Philosophical Content of Śivadṛṣṭi and Īśvarapratyabhijñā

PRIOR TO THE COMPOSITION of *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā* by Utpaladeva, Somānanda had already laid down the essential principles of Trika philosophical thought in his *Śivadṛṣṭi*. It goes to the credit of Somānanda, the teacher of Utpaladeva, who, for the first time, established such metaphysical principles as would culminate in the emergence of what has come to be known as the Pratyabhijñā School of Thought. While the *Śivasūtra* and the *Spandakārikā* contained such theological principles that had philosophical orientation, so the ground already existed for Somānanda to usher in such metaphysical thinking that would enrich abundantly the Trika Śaivism. His ablest and the most competent disciple, namely, Utpaladeva, so enriched the metaphysical thought of Somānanda as would receive its final and necessary imprimatur from Abhinavagupta himself.

The text of the *Śivadṛṣṭi*, though abstruse, contains such breadth of vision as would terminate in the universalisation of Trika metaphysical thought. The importance of the text can be gauged from the fact that Abhinavagupta is said to have composed a commentary, namely, *Śivadṛṣṭi-locana*, on it. Unfortunately this commentary of Abhinavagupta is no more available. Also Utpaladeva, the disciple of Somānanda and the author of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, has also composed a commentary on the *Śivadṛṣṭi* by the name of *Vṛtti*. Unfortunately this *Vṛtti* is not available beyond the seventy-fourth couplet of the fourth chapter.

Insofar as the general philosophical framework of the *Śivadṛṣṭi* is concerned, it is simultaneously absolutic as well as theistic. In

contrast to the impersonal and inctive Absolute of Śaṅkara, Somānanda looks at the Absolute as being such consciousness as would be self-cognitive, which would denote that the Absolute is not so transcendent as to be devoid of internal movemnet. Linking itself to the theory of divine stir (*spanda*), Somānanda thereby points out that the Absolute is not simple pure consciousness, but is I-consciousness, and in terms of which It knows itself as to what It is in-itself. Since the Absolute is both consciousness and self-awareness, so this self-awareness expresses itself in terms of autonomous will. And it is this concept of the autonomy of will that led to the emergence of the philosophy of absolute freedom of will of the Lord, which, when interpreted in relation to the manifestation of the universe, means that the Lord is absolutely free to manifest or not to manifest the phenomenal universe. It would mean that there is no internal or external necessity that impells the Lord to vomit the universe out of himself.

Because of the inherent stir of I-consciousness it is the unending bliss of the Lord, in the form of will, that spills over as the manifest universe. It is in the process of the manifestation of the universe that the will of the Lord terminates in what are called the powers of knowing and doing. Thus the nature (*svarūpa*) of the Absolute is said to be characterised by consciousness (*cit*), bliss (*ānanda*), will (*icchā*), knowledge (*jñāna*), and action (*kriyā*). These five powers, like the waves of the ocean, continuously rise as well as subside, or, should we say, they are tossed to and fro. It is in the process of this emergence and submergence of the powers that there occurs both manifestation and dissolution of the categories of existence (*tattva*-s). When there is emergence or manifestation of the universe, it occurs in the manner of reflection in a mirror. The manifest universe as being the reflection and the Absolute is linked to the potential existence of the tree in a seed. As the tree or plant exists potentially in the seed, so exists potentially the universe in the Asbolute prior to its manifestation. It means that what we perceive as the manifest universe is fundamentally nothing else but the self-expansion of the Lord himself. It is a view that says that every manifest caregory, whether organic or inorganic, is identical with the Absolute, which is to say that nothing exists apart from the Lord.

The Absolute, while manifesting itself as the universe, so atomizes itself as to become a bound being (*paśu*), and in terms of which are experienced the limitations within the continuum of space and time. It is by becoming a limited being that Śiva conceals (*pidhāna*) his existential nature. And this concealment of essential nature denotes the bound existence of Śiva as an individual existent. It amounts to saying that it is Śiva himself who, as it were, exists as a bound being within the circuit of phenomenal becoming. In contrast to this activity of concealment, there is another activity of Śiva, which is that of revelation (*anugraha*). It is through grace that Śiva reveals his essential nature to the limited individual, and in terms of which the limited individual recognises his own nature as being identical with the Absolute. Thus the basic activities that the Absolute as Godhead performs with regard to phenomenal manifestation are the emanation of the universe, its preservation and destruction. The last two activities that the Lord engages in are those of concealment and revelation.

The text of the *Śivadṛṣṭi* in its present format consists of seven chapters (*āhnikā*-s). In the very first chapter are defined the parameters of the principles of ontology, thereby envisaging as to what kind of conception of reality is going to be propounded.[1] The highest ontological principle, called Śiva, is so defined as to include within its ambit the entirety of phenomena. It is this eternally existing reality, called Paramaśiva, which, as it were, manifests the universe out of itself. As to how this process of manifestation of categories eventuates is fully explained in this chapter. While laying the necessary foundation of Trika absolutism, Somānanda accordingly explores the philosophy of the Grammarians. While not agreeing with the Grammarians with regard to their theory of appearance (*vivarta*), Somānanda thereby points out the logical deficiency concerning the notion of the Absolute as being identical with the "Word-brahman" (*śabda-brahman*).[2] Further Somānanda delineates his theory of Speech in the context of views that the Grammarians hold. There is a severe form of criticism lodged against such a theory or ignorance (*avidyā*) that considers it to be beginningless and inexplicable. In the third chapter of the text is undertaken for

examination the Śākta concept of reality. The Śāktas equate reality with the principle of Energy, whereas Śiva is considered to be one of the states of Śakti. Such a doctrine of the Śāktas concerning the Absolute is not acceptable to Somānanda. In the fourth chapter logic is so made use of as to give firm grounding to theistic absolutism and in terms of which an explanation is offered concerning the playful divine activities of the Lord. In the fifth chapter are refuted such logical deficiencies that might emerge from such opponents as the Vijñānavādins with regard to Trika nondualism. In the sixth chapter, while examining the views concerning the Absolute of different schols, Somānanda accordingly explains as to what kind of ontology he is going to propound. It is such a form of non-dualism that does not terminate in the negation of the world. Instead this ontology maintains that the world is nothing but the manifestation of the Absolute, which in theological terms means that Śiva is everything and everything is Śiva. This conclusion is arrived at by making the use of the Sāṅkhya causal theory known as *satkāryavāda*, which says that the effect is identical with the cause. In the case of the world it would mean that it, being the effect, is identical with the cause, which is Śiva. Thus it is an absolutism that is referred to as the supreme form of non-dualism or transcendental non-dualism (*para-advaita*).[3] However, this transcendental non-dualism is not such as would have an Absolute that is ineffective, impersonal and inactive. It is at this juncture that Somānanda speaks of the Absolute as being such who has the characteristic of a theistic God. Thus the Absolute of Somānanda has a theistic orientation. In this manner is established an absolutism that goes beyond the impersonalism of Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. In the last chapter, which is the seventh, attention is focussed on the practical side of Trika Śaivism. Various forms of meditations are so explained as would lead the practitioner to his cherished goal, which is complete soteric absorption in the Absolute. At the close of the chapter is narrated a brief history of the origin and transmission of Trika Śaivism in Kashmir and the role his family has played in preserving this esoteric tradition.

It was left to Utpaladeva to complete the task that his teacher, Somānanda, left for him, which he competently and ably

accomplished by composing the philosophical treatise called the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*. The text of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā* is such an original philosophical treatise that it marks a kind of watershed in the evolution of Indian philosophical thinking. The significance of this treatise can be gauged from the very fact that not only the philosophical school of thought of the Trika is given the name of this text, namely, the Pratyabhijñā School of Philosophy, but also has been commented upon by Abhinavagupta through his two exhaustive and unparalleled commentaries, namely, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī* and the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśinī*. Of course, his teacher, Somānanda, in his *Śivadṛṣṭi*, had already foreshadowed the themes with which Utpaladeva is grappling within this text. The text in its present format consists of four sections (*adhikāra*-s), and each section is divided into a number of chapters. The first section, called *jñānādhikāra*, of the text concerns itself with such epistemological problem as, for example, cognition, whereas the second, known as *kriyādhikāra*, deals with the nature of action. The third section entitled *āgamādhikāra* deals with the thirty-six categories of manifestation that the Trika Śaivism considers as constituting the principles of pure and impure phenomenal order. It also concerns itself with such theological notions as, for example, bondage versus freedom, the means of liberation, nature and types of impurities, and so on. Lastly, we have the fourth section, which is known as the *tattvasaṅgrahādhikāra*. This section, while concerning itself with the question of essential nature of the Absolute, also revisits the thinking that has gone in the composition of the first three sections of the text.

In the first chapter (*āhṇikā*) of the first section of the text Utpaladeva, while following in the footsteps of his teacher, describes as to what is the source of cognition and action, and, according to him, the source is nothing else but the Self. And this Self is identified with the Absolute of philosophy, which is given the nomenclature of Maheśvara. Thus the ultimate cause of everything, including cognition and action, is this philosophic Absolute, namely, Maheśvara. Also this Maheśvara is said to be identical with the absolute Free Will (*māheśvarya*). Whatever exists, whether it is at the microcosmic level or the macrocosmic

level, whether it is sentient or insentient, is, according to Utpaladeva, endowed with these two attributes or characteristics (*yo hi jānati ca karoti sa jīvati*). In the very first verse Utpaladeva gives the reason as to why he is composing this work on Pratyabhijñā, and the reason, according to him, is nothing else than to disclose that this system of thought is the best means insofar as the realization of the highest value is concerned.[4] It is at this point of evaluation that the author introduces the question, through the mouth of the opponent (*pūrvapakṣin*), as to why there should arise at all the need of recognizing the nature of the self-luminous Maheśvara who, as Being par excellence, is said to be the substratum of our own self. And as such is made the claim that such Being is both the Knower and the Actor. To answer the query of the questioner the author maintains that it is a futile undertaking of establishing or negating the existence of such an eternal Being. Why? It is so because of the fact that the existence of such a conscious Being is self-proved.[5] As the proponent (*uttarapakṣin*), the author answers the objection raised by the opponent by saying that the Self, though essentially luminous, is not so manifest as to have no need of composing this treatise. The essential nature of the Self is not perfectly known to us or is not manifest. Such a situation owes its existence to the fact that the Self conceals its nature due to its deluding power (*māyā vimohinī śaktiḥ*). The self-luminous nature of the Self/ Maheśvara becomes manifest due to its own cognising power, which, however, remains concealed on account of its own deluding power. It is through the intuitive power of recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) that this power of cognition is facilitated to come into being.[6] The opponent at this point interjects by saying that cognition is possible only with regard to sentient beings. If so, then how can such an activity be ascribed to entities that are insentient? The author as the proponent answer the objection by saying that the very existence of an object is dependent upon the knowing subject, which means that the object does not exist apart from the subject. Elaborating the argument, the author maintains that it is universally agreed that all sentient beings are endowed with the characteristics of knowing and doing. Thus the so-called insentient entities, being dependent upon the knowing

subject, too, are endowed with the powers of knowing and doing. The opponent, however, does not seem to be satisfied with such an answer, and so he asks the question as to how these two primary characteristics of the Self can be proved? The author answers the question in terms of maintaining that knowledge is in no need of external or internal proof on account of it being self-proved (*svataḥ siddhaṃ*). Insofar as action is concerned, it is always associated with the body (*kriyā kāyāśrita sati*), because it is in and through the apparatus of the body that action is executed. And every cognizing subject, thus, can have the perception of it. Moreover, it is through action that the knowledge of the other can be inferred.[7]

The next two chapters concern themselves in refuting the Buddhist view concerning the Self as being of momentary nature. One of the important doctrines of the Buddhists is that of the non-existence of the Self, which is based upon the doctrine of flux. According to this doctrine, every thing is subject to flux, which means that there is no permanency of or stability in any thing, including the Self. It is this theory of insubstantialism that led the Buddhists to categorise the Self as being impermanent, which is equated with momentariness. Utpaladeva rejects this Buddhist contention of the Self as being momentary on the basis of the actuality of memory, which is to say that it would be impossible to recall or remember anything in the absence of a permanent Self. If the existence of the Self is denied, then we will have an unimaginable chaos insofar as the settled order of the world is concerned. If everything has a momentary existence, then we will not be able even to have perception of anything, because it will not be possible to integrate "I," "awareness," and the object, which are constitutive of one's experience and which occur at three different moments of time, into one identical relation. The Buddhists cannot deny the occurrence of these three aspects of experience, which eventuate at different moments of time. Also it is a fact of experience for each one of us that there is such a principle within us that persists through all the changing states of consciousness. Even though our ideas may be changing with reference to the changing objects, there remains the fact that we do not change. All this discloses the fact that, while

knowing ourselves as pure awareness, we remain constantly connected with the changing objects. Thus the existence of such an entity as the permanent Self is established on the basis of the common experience that we all have: that there persists within us such a permanent entity that persists through all the changing states of consciousness. It is this very persisting principle or entity, called the Self, that remembers the object that had been previously cognised by it. The Buddhist opponent at this point intervenes in terms of the question whose thrust is to reject the notion that we remember the previously cognised object due to the unchanging Self. The Buddhist opponent says that the perception of the previously cognised object in terms of remembrance emerges not because of the Self, but because of the impressions (*saṃskāra*-s) that are, as it were, stored in the subconscious mind (*ālaya-vijñāna*). The impressions that are stored in the subconscious mind become, according to the Buddhist thinking, the common ground for perception. This objection is answered by showing that the Buddhist view of the mind as existing momentarily is unacceptable. If the mind exists momentarily, it would mean that it couldn't receive as well as store the impressions. Also impressions themselves would be, according to this view, momentary, which would mean that they could neither be received nor stored in the almost non-existent mind. In such a scenario there is no possibility for perception of any kind to occur. Thus the only logical way is to postulate the existence of such Self that is permanent, and due to which occur perceptions.

While establishing the existence of the Self (*ātman*) that persists through all the states of consciousness, Utpaladeva goes on to explain that this Self, also known as Maheśvara, is endowed with three powers, which are the power of remembrance (*smaraṇa-śakti*), the power of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*) and the power of differentiation (*apohana-śakti*). All the three powers constitute the cognitive power (*jñātṛtva-śakti*) of the Self. The power of remembrance, which is at length discussed in chapter four, is such by which the Self, while having experienced the cognition of the object in one state, experiences it again, through the process of remembrance, in another state. Even in the absence

of remembrance the Self persists, which means that it does not lose the power to remember objects and events that have been previously experienced. Insofar as the power of knowledge is concerned, it makes entities manifest outwardly in the form they have been perceived. Prior to their manifestation, they exist within consciousness. Since an unlimited mass of entities lie merged in consciousness, so it is only certain entities that are taken out for separate manifestation. As the real nature of objects is but *prakāśa* (light of consciousness) (*prakāśa eva arthānām svarūpaṃ*), so it is but natural for them to become manifest. Had objects not been of the nature of light, then they would never appear, which would mean complete absence of knowledge. Since it is the very nature of entities to be manifest, it means that it is the innate nature of knowledge to be of the nature of *prakāśa*. This assertion would mean that the objects are real and not a figment of imagination. Also the Buddhist concept of objects as being the transformation of our desire (*vāsanā*) is completely rejected, because such a view would lead to the assertion that the objects have no separate existence of their own. The processes of the mind, which consist of will, knowledge and action, become operational on account of the power of knowledge. As to what characterises the power of knowledge is discussed in detail in chapter five. Insofar as the power of differentiation (*apohana-śakti*) is concerned, it is discussed in chapter six. It is on account of this power that the Self manifests one object, such as jar (*ghaṭa*), as being different from all other objects that are non-jar. Upon explaining as what these three powers are, Utpaladeva, in chapter seven, accordingly establishes that the substratum or ground of these powers is but the Self, which is Maheśvara. Maheśvara as the philosophic Absolute is also endowed with will that is autonomous. While discussing in chapter eight as to what the concept of sovereign will of Maheśvara denotes, Utpaladeva thereby also discusses the two new theories which he inserts in his discussion, namely, the theory of sovereignty (*svātantryavāda*) and the theory of appearance (*ābhāsavāda*).

The second section of the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, known as *kriyādhikāra*, discusses the power of action (*kriyā-śakti*) of the Absolute. It is on account of this power that the entire process of

the manifest order is accomplished. The power of action completes the process of manifestation through its three laws, which are the law of division (*bhedābheda*), the law of perception (*māna tatphala meya*) and the law of causation (*kārya-kāraṇa*). Through the operation of these laws the power of action terminates into creative power (*nirmāṇa-śakti*), as a result of which is emanated the objective universe. While discussing in the first chapter as to what is the nature of the power of action, there occurs the interjection of the opponent and in terms of which is raised the following question. Action, as we all know, consists of succession (*krama*), and due to this succession is given rise to the diversity that is constitutive of the universe. Diversity, according to the non-dualist Śaivas, is said to be contrary to the nature of the Self on account of it being devoid of multiplicity. In response to this objection of the opponents, the author maintains that plurality that comes about due to action is the result of the power of time (*kāla-śakti*). The power of time gives rise to plurality when an object is perceived at different moments of time.[8] The Self that is endowed with the power of action is not at all influenced or affected by time, and so is completely free from the plurality that the opponents attempt to ascribe to it. In addition to resorting to the theory of time, Utpaladeva also explains the occurrence of the so-called plurality through the theory of appearance (*ābhāsa-vāda*). The doctrine of appearance maintains that the ultimate cause of the diverse manifestation (*citrabhāsakṛī prabhu*) is none other than the Great Lord (Maheśvara). It is through the power of time that the Lord, at different moments of time, so diversifies manifestation as to result in the differentiation of entities. Also is explained in the context of the theory of appearance as to what kind of relation occurs between the subject, knowledge and the object (*pramātā, pramāṇa,* and *prameya*). Alongside it is also explained, from a non-dualistic perspective, the relation that takes place between cause and effect (*kāraṇa-kārya*). All these philosophical concepts are discussed, within the overall framework of Pratyabhijñā philosophy, in the next chapters of the second section of the book. The conclusion that is arrived at is this: It is One Lord who as the supreme Subject (*ahaṃ*) manifests himself as this (*idam*), viz., the universe. The world is accordingly

analysed into thirty-six categories in terms of which is explained the order of pure and impure manifestation. The analysis is carried out from the highest category, which is that of Śiva, to the lowest one, which is that of Earth.

The third section, known as the *āgamādhikāra*, deals with such supernatural elements that are purely theological in orientation and have their roots in such scriptural texts that are known as Āgamas. It deals with such theological notions as, for example, the idea of pure and impure emanation, the concept of bondage as well as of impurities (*mala*-s). In addition to these theological concepts, the text also concerns itself with different states of the subject, which are said to be waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*), the Fourth (*turya*), and beyond the Fourth (*turyātīta*). Also are discussed the four means of liberation (*mokṣopāya*), which are the *āṇavopāya, śāktopāya, śāmbhavopāya,* and *anopāya*. These are some of the main theological notions that have been explained in this section.

The last section, namely, the section known as the *tattva-saṅgrahādhikāra*, reconsiders all the important philosophical ideas of the Pratyabhijñā system that have been discussed in the first three sections of the treatise. The author further explains as to what constitutes the essential nature of the Absolute, which is viewed as being the Self of all existents.[9] Since the Absolute, which is Maheśvara, is the Self of all, it means that there is no essential difference existing between the limited self (*paśu*) and the Absolute. The aim of this system of thought, thus, is to enable the limited being to recognise his essential nature in terms of identity with the Absolute. If this is so, it means that the manifest order, too, is non-different from the Absolute.[10] Upon recognising oneself as being non-different from Maheśvara, one thereby gains the power of obtaining knowledge of one's cognition and action. It is this knowledge concerning the powers of cognition and action that terminate in the accomplishment of the desired object.[11] It is upon recognising the essential nature of the Self that one obtains supreme satisfaction, joy and bliss. It is upon realising the nature of the Self that one attains the highest value of life, which is nothing else than absolute freedom. It is in the context of this goal that Utpaladeva seems to have composed this most

important philosophical treatise. He himself says that this treatise has been composed "in order that common people may have the transcendental power without resorting to much exertion."[12]

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1. *Śivadṛṣṭi*, 1.1: *asmad-rūpa-samāveśtaḥ svātmanātma-nivāraṇe, śivaḥ karotu nijaya namaḥ śaktya tatātmane/*
2. Ibid., 3:11.
3. See *Mālinīvijaya-vārttika*, 1.123; 2.42.
4. *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikā*, 1.1.1: *samasta-sampata-samāvaptihetuṃ tat-pratyabhijñām upapādayāmi/*
5. Ibid., 1.1.2: *kartari jñātari svātmany ādi-siddhe maheśvare . . . /*
6. Ibid., 1.1.3: *kiṃtu moha-vaśād asmin dṛṣṭe'py anupalakṣite, śaktyā-viṣ-karaṇena-iyaṃ pratyabhijñopadarśyate/*
7. Ibid., 1.4.5: *tatra jñānaṃ svataḥ siddhaṃ kriyā kāyāśritā, parair apy upalakṣyeta tayānya-jñānam ūhyate/*
8. Ibid., 2.1.3: *kalaḥ sūryādi-sañcāras tat-tat-puṣpādi-janma vā, śītoṣṇe yātha tal-lakṣyaḥ krama eva sa tattvataḥ/*
9. Ibid., 4.1.1: *svātmaiva sarva-jantūnām eka eva maheśvaraḥ . . ./*
10. Ibid., 4.1.12: *so'haṃ mamāyaṃ vibhava ity evaṃ parijānataḥ . . ./*
11. Ibid., 4.1.15: *evam ātmānam etasya samyag-jñāna-kriye tathā, paśyan yathepsitān arthān jānāti ca karoti ca/*
12. Ibid., 4.1.18: *jansyāyatna-siddhy-artham . . . īśvara-pratyabhijñeyam utpalenopapāditā.*

17

Pañcastavī: An Analysis

THE TEXT of *Pañcastavī* belongs to that genre of hymnal literature in which laudatory praises are offered to a deity towards whom the composer of the hymn feels emotionally attached. Most of such laudatory literature, thus, is devotional in character and theistic in orientation. The *Pañcastavī*, while belonging to the devotional class of literature, is a text that consists of five laudatory hymns addressed to the Mother-Goddess, namely, to Tripurā, who in theological terms is considered as being the personification of Godhead of the Lord. The Trika Śaivism of Kashmir, as an offshoot of Tantrism, understands the nature of the Absolute as consisting of two aspects: Śiva and Śakti. When the Absolute is termed as being transcendent, and thereby static, it is spoken of as Śiva. Similarly the Absolute, when viewed in dynamic terms, is spoken of as Śakti, and Śakti, at the level of popular religious anthropomorphism, represents the Mother-Goddess concretely. The Absolute, in its Śiva aspect, is totally transcendent, and so unthinkable. However, it is the aspect of Śakti that explains the theistic nature of reality. This nomenclature of the Absolute as Śiva and Śakti should not be seen as bringing a kind of conceptual dualism through backdoor. The Absolute is one and single, and so non-dual. This so-called conceptual dualism is made use of to explain as to how, at least, mentally the Absolute may be approached for the sake of understanding.

The Absolute as pure consciousness is not just light (*prakāśa*)—a light that illumines and is itself illumination. It is also self-referential (*vimarśa*), viz., the Absolute as consciousness not only is illumination, but also knows itself as being illumination. While

remaining itself ever pure, the Absolute through its Energy, which is Śakti, emits the universe out of itself, which means that the power of the Lord as freedom is thereby actualised. It is in the context of this understanding that the Lord is said to be in possession of five cosmic powers, which are consciousness, bliss, creation, maintenance, and dissolution. The last three powers are cosmological in nature, whereas the first two define the nature of the Absolute.

As to why the Absolute is ascribed with such extensive powers is, firstly, to explain the Godhead aspect of it, which means that the ultimate reality (*anuttara*) is not just an impersonal category or principle, but is endowed with personhood. Secondly, had not the Absolute been endowed with such a nature, then it alone would have existed. Such a scenario would have meant that neither the subject nor the object would have existed. Such a bleak picture would be bereft of any charm. Since there is subject and object as well as the universe, it means that the Absolute must necessarily be understood, in relation to creation, in terms of Godhead. The greatest charm for the subject lies in recognising that he is essentially identical with the Absolute, which in religious language would mean that everything is non-different from the Absolute.

The Absolute as Godhead, while emitting the universe out of itself, conceals its nature, which in relation to the subject means that he does not know who he is. This non-knowledge of one's essential nature is spoken of as ignorance, which is equated with forgetfulness. Forgetfulness denotes that we have forgotten something about which we have had glimmer of knowledge. So recognition is not possible apart from forgetfulness, because recognition involves recollection of a previously known event that has subsequently been forgotten. The Absolute, while emitting the categories of existence out of itself, conceals his nature by appearing as a finite being. In contrast to concealment, there is an another movement in the Absolute, and this movement is known as that of revelation. And this act of revelation of the Lord is actualised when the so-called finite individual realises that he is essentially identical with the Absolute. It is, thus, through the power of revelation that we recognise our essential identity. What it means is this: It is through the power of Godhead of the

Absolute that we come to realise the essential unity of Being.

From this discussion it becomes clear that God is known as God precisely because of him being Godhead—and Godhead is but the dynamic aspect of the Absolute. An adept, while on the way to self-realisation, is helped by higher and superior divine forces, which commonly are known as deities. All such deities up to Sadāśiva category are the external manifestation of the Absolute. Since these deities are but the manifestation of the Absolute, so the worship of these deities so empowers the adept as to be able to reach the goal of self-realisation. As every kind of manifestation occurs through Śakti, so the worship that is offered by the adept is but the worship of Śakti. The worship of Śakti, thus, forms an essential aspect of the spirituality of a Śaiva practitioner. Some outstanding Śaiva saint-scholars like Kallaṭabhaṭṭa, Pradyumnabhaṭṭa, Somānanda, and Abhinavagupta were staunch worshippers of Śakti. Thus such hymns as would eulogize the Goddess have become part and parcel of Śaiva spiritual literature and *Pañcastavī* is one such a beautiful hymn in praise of the Goddess that is almost daily recited by the Śaiva Pandits of Kashmir. It is as beautiful, full of poetical resonance, as is the *Śivastotrāvalī* of Utpaladeva.

At the religious level the best image that has the capacity of describing God as the source of creation is that of "mother." It is for this reason that both the Śaivas and Śāktas look at God as Mother. It is as Mother that God expresses his love as grace for his devotee. It is this aspect of God as Mother that is given a free poetical expression by the composer of the *Pañcastavī*. The *Pañcastavī* as a lyrical hymn in five parts contains such a philosophical conceptuality and devotional emotion that is of a very high order. It is but natural for such a laudatory hymn to gain popularity among the populace, which it has attained among the Śaivas of Kashmir.

Such has been the popularity of *Pañcastavī* among the Śaivas of Kashmir that many commentaries, particularly on the first hymn, have been composed. The first hymn attracted the attention of commentators on account of it containing within its ambit many esoteric doctrines. There is allusion in this hymn as to how the Goddess is to be worshipped through the use of the "seed-

mantra" (*bīja-mantra*). One of the commentators has called this hymn as the *Tripura-bhāratī-stva.* All the five hymns contain, although in a diffused manner, many Śākta and tantric practices. At many places in the *Pañcastavī* are to be found Śākta-Śaiva principles of non-dualism described. The poetic style of all the five hymns is such as would be a sufficient proof in establishing that the composition is of one and the same person.

The hymns of the *Pañcastavī* are so inspirational as to result in an emotional outburst. Most such devotional hymns are basically inspirational in origin. The poet usually interprets his inspiration as a kind of favour by God (cf. *Mālinīvijaya,* 2.4–16). Although the composer of the hymns of the *Pañcastavī* says nothing much about his personal life, yet he seems to be so self-assured as to maintain that whatever he has become, is because of the favour of the Goddess. As to how the Goddess has favoured him is described thus:

yācena kañcana na kañcana vañcayāmi,
seve na kañcana nirasta-samasta-dainyaḥ;
slekṣṇam vase madhuramadmi bhaje varastrīm,
devī hṛdi sphurati me kila kāmadhenuḥ/ (3.19)

The favour that the poet seeks is to remain constantly engaged, through his senses, in the worship of the Goddess. Regarding this desire of worshipping the Goddess continuously is expressed thus:

tvadrūpaika-nirūpana-praṇayitā bhandhodṛśos tvadguṇa-
gramā karṇana-rāgitā śravanayostvat-saṃsmṛtiś cetasi
tvat-pādārcana-cāturī-karayuge tvat-kīrtanam vāci me
kutrāpi tvadupāsana-vyasanitā me devī mā śāmyatu/

As the hymns of the *Pañcastavī* are very popular among the Pandits of Kashmir, so it is natural for them to think that the composer of these hymns must have been from the land of Kashmir. There is an oral tradition prevalent in Kashmir that says that the great Ācārya Abhinavagupta composed these hymns at the time of his philosophical disputation on Śāktism with

Śaṅkarācārya. Even one of the leading exponents of Kashmir Śaivism, namely, Śivopādhyāya of the eighteenth century, refers to this oral tradition in his *Śrīvidyā*. Such stories are purely apocryphal. How could there have occurred a philosophical discussion between Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta when the former lived in the eighth century and the latter in the tenth–eleventh centuries? Such stories are simply inserted in order to enhance the local ethnic pride.

The source of this oral tradition concerning the philosophical disputation between Śaṅkarācārya and Abhinavagupta seems to be the poetical composition, namely, the *Śaṅkara-digvijaya* of Mādhavācārya of fourteenth century. This poetical composition on the life of Śaṅkara is more given to flights of imagination than to historical accuracy. There is hardly any historicity to be found in this composition concerning the events in the life of Śaṅkara. The author of this text does not even rely on a much earlier autobiographical account of Anantānandagiri's (ninth century). As Anantānandagiri lived in the ninth century, it would mean that the gap between Śaṅkara and Anantānandagiri is only of one hundred years. Since the historical distance between the two is not wide, so his account about the religious activities of Śaṅkarācārya have much more historical value than the fictitious tales woven by the poetical imagination of Mādhavācārya.

This fictitious account concerning the philosophical disputation between Śaṅkarācārya and Abhinavagupta seems to have been imported into the Valley of Kashmir during the fifteenth century when the Pandits of Kashmir, on the invitation of king Zain-ul-'Ābidīn, returned to the Valley of Kashmir after having led a life of exile in the plains of India. It is during the period of their exile that these Pandits seem to have been influenced by the fictitious accounts of Mādhavācārya's *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*. So such apocryphal stories have no historical value, and must therefore be discounted.

As to who is the real author of the *Pañcastavī* is a mystery. The earliest references we get concerning the authorship of the *Pañcastavī* are from Nityānanda. Nityānanda, himself a commentator of many tantric texts, ascribed the authorship of the first hymn of the text, namely, the *Laghustava*, to Dharmācārya,

which however has been corroborated by Vidyāraṇya in his *Śrīvidyārṇavatantra*. While referring to the stanza concerning the *māyā-kuṇḍalinī*, Vidyāraṇya thereby asserts that Dharmācārya in his *Laghustava* has enunciated a particular theological line of thought. Since Vidyāraṇya has referred to the *Laghustava*, so it would mean that Dharmācārya must have lived earlier to Vidyāraṇya. As all the five hymns of the *Pañcastavī* are identical in diction and theological thinking, so one and the same person must have composed all of them, which in our case would be but Dharmācārya.

Whosoever Dharmācārya may have been, it is, however, certain that he did not hail from the land of Kashmir. It seems that he most probably, like Śaṅkara, hailed from the land of Kerala.This assertion is based upon the following assumptions:

The poetic technique as well as the theology of the *Pañcastavī* is very similar, if not identical, to that of the *Saundaryalaharī* of Śaṅkarācārya. In addition to it, there is an allusion to be found in the text concerning the worship of the Goddess as Śabarī. The Goddess as Śabarī plays an important part in the tantric worship of Kerala, whereas there is no such similar tradition to be found in Kashmir. Also note may be taken of the fact that no mention is made in the text of such female deities as belonging to the Kālī tradition of Kashmir. The Śaivas of Kashmir have worshipped such Kālī deities that were made popular by Somānanda, Abhinavagupta, and Jayaratha. Also the system of yoga that is prescribed by the author of the text does represent neither the Trika yoga nor the yoga of Kaula tradition—and both these systems of yoga have been popular among the Śaivas and the Śāktas of Kashmir. The yoga to which the text alludes is that of *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, which does not hold much attraction among the Śaivas of Kashmir. The Trika system has given the lowest position to this form of yoga by assigning it to the position of *āṇavopāya*. This form of yoga, no doubt, is very popular among Siddhānta Śaivas as well as the Vīraśaivas of the south. It is also of interest to note that the Śākta or Śāmbhava means of liberation, which play very important role in the Trika Śaivism insofar as the attainment of liberation is concerned, are not even mentioned in the text, let alone explained theologically. Even though an allusion to

kriyāyoga is to be found in the text, yet no specific practices of *āṇavopāya* like those of *uccāra* or *dhyāna* have at all been taken note of.

The above analysis points out in clear terms that the text of the *Pañcastavī* follows such tantric practices that were prevalent in Kerala and not the ones that pertain to the tantric tradition of Kashmir. The only common ground that exists between the theology of *Pañcastavī* and the Trika Śaivism is the worship of Tripurā as the Mother-Goddess in terms of the three seed-mantras, namely, *vāgbhava, kāmarāja,* and *śaktibīja.* But, then, all these seed-mantras are common to all the Śaiva/Śākta traditions. The popularity of the text does not mean that it originated in Kashmir or its author is a Kashmiri. There is another non-Kashmiri text in origin, like the *Pañcastavī,* that enjoys great popularity in Kashmir, and the text is the *Mukundamālā* of Kulaśekhara of Tamil Nadu. What can be said with certainty is the fact that Dharmācārya, the author of the *Pañcastavī*, was a master of Śaiva/Śākta non-dualism, and so belongs to the pan-Indian tantric ethos.

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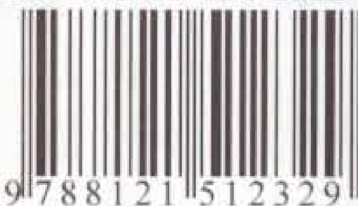
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